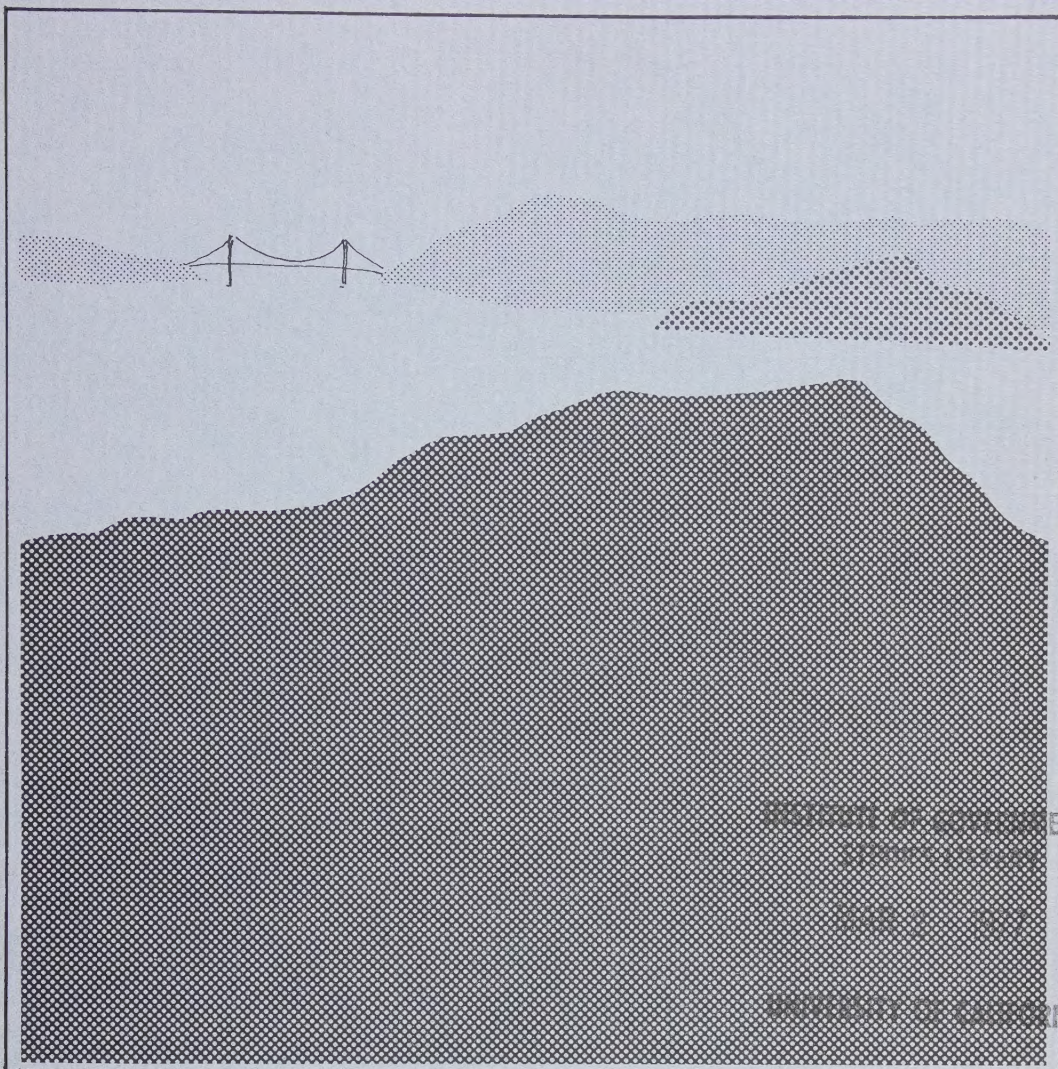


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INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL
PLANNING

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

GENERAL PLAN

ALBANY, CALIFORNIA



DUNCAN & JONES

Urban & Environmental Planning Consultants

GENERAL PLAN ALBANY, CALIFORNIA

PREPARED FOR THE
CITY OF ALBANY • GENERAL PLAN REVISION PROGRAM

JULY, 1975

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[Albany. City council]
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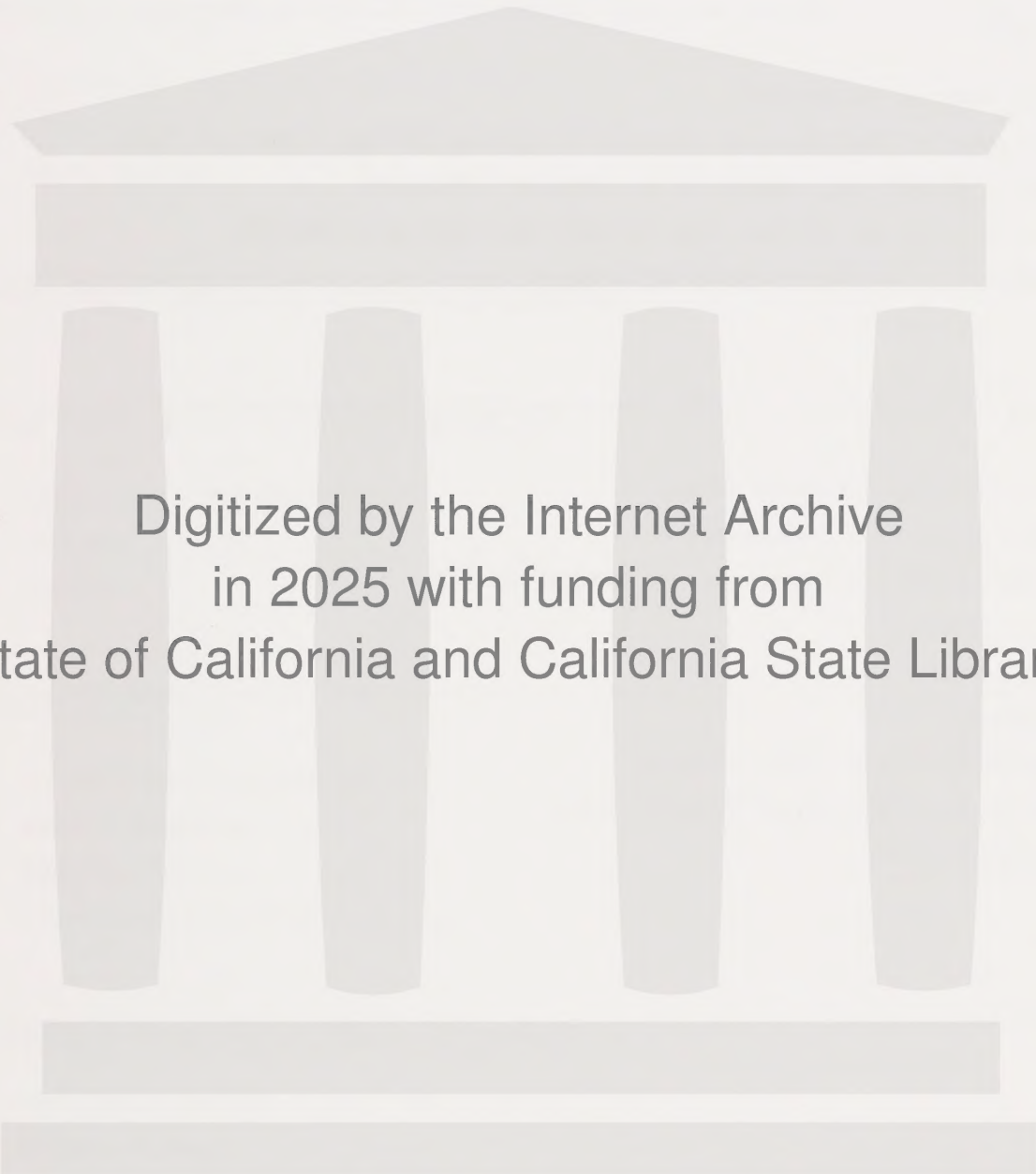
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I. INTRODUCTION

The Albany General Plan Revision Program, begun in April 1973, was initiated in response to changes in the State mandates relating to the local planning process, to the need to provide a more current analysis of the City's physical constraints and opportunities, as well as the need to set forth the long-term goals and objectives of the City. State law now requires that local general plans contain a housing element, seismic safety element, noise element, scenic highway element, safety element, open space element and conservation element, as well as land use and circulation elements. In response to these requirements this plan has been divided into the following major subject areas: The Residential Environment, the Natural Environment, Circulation, the Commercial Environment, and the Planning Process.

A. NATURE OF THE ALBANY GENERAL PLAN

This General Plan identifies goals, defines City policies and establishes procedures enabling the local government to implement the defined policies in the plan period. It establishes a desired land use pattern within the community, which serves as a framework for future development and growth in the community. It outlines environmental constraints in Albany, and focuses not only on the type of development, but also on the quality of the development and the effect of new development and public actions upon the existing community.

The land use element and policies establish the long-term goals of the community, the desired mixture of uses and type of development over a long period of time, while the recommendations for implementation are intended to be carried out in the next one to five years. The Plan provides a basis not only for responding intelligently and effectively to proposals for new development but also for initiating programs to deal with and respond to the existing environment.

The General Plan Revision Program was carried out in two phases: an Open Space Element of the General Plan was initially completed in accordance with State requirements in May 1973, and was adopted by the City Council in December 1973.

2 The major portion of the revision program in which the other plan elements were addressed was carried out in the period from August 1973 through July 1975. The Citizens' Advisory Committee met with the Consultant to provide policy input into the planning process. Consultation with members of the City staff, regional agencies related to planning, local citizens, members of the Planning and Zoning Commission as well as the City Council all assisted the Consultant in evaluating community needs and priorities. The Discussion Draft of the Preliminary General Plan was submitted to the Citizens' Advisory Committee for initial review of Plan proposals. The CAC reviewed the draft and submitted comments and suggestions to the Consultant. This input was used as a basis for revising the draft and developing it as a Preliminary General Plan report for presentation to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council for public hearing and final adoption. Technical information developed during the planning program is included in the Basic Data Report printed in December 1973, and the supplemental technical material available at the Albany city offices. The Consultants gratefully acknowledge the participation and assistance of the Citizens' Advisory Committee.

The text of this report is divided into five major sections incorporating those elements required by State law:

I. The Housing Environment: includes a summary of the analysis of the housing stock, recommends plans for the improvement of housing and standards for new development, and considers the means for providing adequate housing for all residents of Albany.

II. The Natural Environment: includes analyses and policies related to open space, conservation, seismic safety, and safety considerations. It includes the evaluation of existing public open space, the identification of unimproved land or water natural resource areas, scenic lands as well as wildlife habitats. The section on seismic considerations discusses the nature of seismic hazards in Albany, while the section on safety establishes policies for the protection of the community from fires and non-seismically related geologic hazards.

III. Circulation: includes the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, and terminals. It includes bicycle routes, scenic highways, and the noise element which shows present and projected noise levels associated with all existing and proposed major transportation elements.

IV. The Economic Environment: discusses the business environment in Albany, the treatment of existing commercial and industrial areas, and the constraints

and opportunities for new economic development.

V. The Planning Process: sets up a mechanism for implementing the policies and programs recommended in the various sections of the Plan.

B. EXISTING CHARACTER AND CONTEXT FOR PLANNING

The City of Albany, situated in the East Bay between Richmond, El Cerrito and Berkeley, encompasses a total area within its boundaries of 3,218 acres, of which 1,117 acres are land area, and 2,101 acres are submerged tideland and bay area. Settled and developed in the early twentieth century, the community is residential in character, with a predominance of single-family housing.

The approach taken in the General Plan Revision Program to analyzing the City was to identify the patterns of existing development in the City, those qualities of the community which appear desirable to retain, as well as examples of conflicts of use and under-utilization of land, and to define those areas of the City that warrant special types of public and private action. These analyses also identified environmental constraints and resources that either should be protected, preserved, or developed, or which would place constraints on new or existing development.

In the twenty year time frame on which this plan is based, changes in land use, intensity of use and the amount of public improvement in different areas of the City will have an incremental effect on the character of Albany, and can, unless planned for in an orderly fashion, have an undesirable impact on the community. Therefore, it is appropriate to determine a desirable pattern for the distribution of land uses and to establish the character of development for Albany in the future.

The General Plan pattern of land uses, its policies, and implementation mechanisms were developed to ensure that the distribution and location of land uses in Albany should constitute both a desirable and achievable pattern for the community. In some areas the constraints of the natural environment indicate limits to the potential for development. There are only a few areas of incompatible use in the City. As residential and commercial structures age in the City, public actions and initiative will be necessary to preserve or improve the desirable qualities in these areas. Efforts should be made to ensure that new development replaces obsolete buildings or uses. The quality of this new

4 development should be subjected to careful review, so as to enhance the attractiveness of the surrounding areas, and to prevent any further deterioration in the character of the residential environment that might be caused by congestion, lack of open space or incompatible building design or appearance. On San Pablo Avenue new development should be encouraged to increase the economic viability of the commercial area. The Albany Isles Plan completed in 1969 represents the adopted City policy for the development of that portion of the shoreline, but the area is currently being reviewed under a separate study.

The concerns of the individual chapters of the General Plan--housing, natural environment, circulation, and economic environment--were combined to reflect an overall picture of future land use distribution in Albany. Recommendations under each section provide a framework within which changes can occur over time within the community. The Planning Process outlined in Chapter V indicates a means for monitoring the changes recommended in the Plan, and for implementing the recommendations for action in the Plan.

The General Plan is a policy document, adopted by the City Council, which states the goals and objectives of the community and outlines the means to be pursued for their achievement. It is expressed graphically by the General Plan map (Map 9), indicating land use areas and circulation patterns to be achieved by the end of the planning period. The General Plan map represents the desired pattern of land use, residential densities and major components of the circulation system toward which the community should move over a twenty-year time frame. The General Plan map indicates the predominant use of land in each area, and does not preclude minor deviations from the overall pattern. Therefore, it does not reflect every church, institution, commercial, single or multi-family residential use that may exist, nor should it be interpreted as recommending or requiring their removal. The General Plan does not automatically change the classification or the permitted use of land. This function is served by the Zoning Ordinance, which should be amended after adoption of the General Plan in accordance with the provisions and policies contained in the Plan. State law now requires that the Zoning Ordinance be in conformity with the policies expressed in the General Plan.

C. PLAN CONCEPT

The analysis conducted during the General Plan Revision Program indicates that Albany is a community in which the large majority of the City's land area is developed, with few vacant parcels offering the potential for new development. With very few exceptions, any development that occurs will result from a re-use of already developed parcels. The community is primarily residential in character, with single-family, one-story structures the dominant housing type. Multi-family structures are concentrated on Kains Street, Adams Street, Solano Avenue and north of Brighton Street. Commercial uses are located on Solano Avenue where professional offices and neighborhood commercial uses are located, and on San Pablo Avenue, where highway-oriented commercial uses are concentrated. The City was settled after the San Francisco earthquake, and over 50 percent of the housing stock was built prior to 1939.

Census information indicates that in the past several decades the predominant population make-up has changed from young families with children, to older couples who have remained in the community after their children have left home. The total population of the City (excluding the University Village student housing) has decreased, as the population per household has decreased. The population is an older, mature one in which one out of four persons is over the age of 65. As the older population give up their homes, they are replaced by younger families with children, by childless couples, and by single young persons. The decline in home ownership and increased renter occupancy of older units, as well as the high population of renter-occupied single-family structures can lead to a difficult housing maintenance situation.

The housing stock in Albany, relatively modest single-family homes, has been and will continue to be a source of moderate-cost owner- and renter-occupied housing. Residents of Albany appreciate the small-town atmosphere of the community, a characteristic missing from many of the adjacent urbanized portions of the Bay Area. The community has no identifiable poverty areas; however the proportion of elderly persons over age 65 classified as having incomes below the defined poverty level is twice the City average, and two out of every five persons classified as poor in the City are over the age of 65. Student housing in University Village forms a sub-community within the City, located west of San Pablo Avenue, south of Buchanan Street. It is owned and operated by the University of California and provides relatively low rent housing for married

New apartment construction frequently is unattractive with cars parked on sidewalks, and designed in a fashion that does not complement the existing housing. The small size of lots encourages piecemeal development of buildings, separated by the minimum required yards, allowing no flexibility in design due to size constraints. In certain areas the requirements of commercial districts for parking, expansion, and storage conflict with the requirements of adjacent residential areas.

The current configuration of San Pablo Avenue is inadequate to handle traffic safely, and does little to reinforce the highway-oriented commercial character of the street.

There are certain environmental constraints that warrant special attention in the community, including the seismic-geologic hazard susceptibility areas identified in the Plan, the importance of Albany Hill as a visual landmark within the City, and of San Francisco Bay and the creek areas which border the City.

The Albany General Plan is based upon the following assumptions:

1. Albany will retain its character as a residential community. The population increase anticipated in Albany during the planning period, as projected by ABAG projections to 1995, is comprised entirely of persons who will occupy the proposed Gateview Apartment complex under construction at the base of Albany Hill, with a potential population of 5,700 residents.
2. Commercial development will continue to be located on Solano Avenue and on San Pablo Avenue.
3. Golden Gate Fields will continue to operate during the planning period as a commercial recreational use.
4. The University of California will continue to own and manage the Gill Tract.
5. There will be no major change in the configuration of I-80 and Route 17 during the planning period.

6. The Albany Isles Plan will not be implemented as planned, but further studies of the Waterfront area will continue.

The actions recommended in the Plan seek to preserve those land use characteristics of the community that have been identified as desirable and to ensure that any new development is compatible with and improves the existing uses, and removes undesirable development. The Plan recommends a housing maintenance program to conserve the existing housing stock, and the establishment of a housing data base and information system. In order to ensure that new development complements existing development and improves the residential environment, a design review process is recommended, as well as specific amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and incentives to promote desirable development.

High density residential development is recommended on Solano Avenue and north of Brighton Avenue, both of which are areas with access to commercial facilities, major traffic links, and rapid transit, as well as areas with a potential for conversion to such use. The General Plan recommends reinforcing the highway-oriented commercial character of San Pablo Avenue, improving the vehicular flow and traffic safety of the street, and enhancing the appearance of the street. On Solano Avenue higher density residential development is recommended although commercial uses would be required at street level. No major circulation changes are recommended in the Plan.

It is impossible to list every variation that might have been considered in developing the General Plan. However, two alternatives to this Plan were considered. One was a no-growth plan that would prohibit any new development. This alternative was rejected, since in certain areas new development was seen as desirable as a means of replacing older, obsolete structures, of providing a variety of housing not now available to the community, as well as of improving the commercial vitality of the City and replacing under-utilized commercial properties. The second alternative of uncontrolled growth was also rejected. Such a scenario would be limited in fact by the existing developed character of the City, the limited availability of vacant land, the cost of redeveloping existing developed areas, the difficulties of assembling large parcels of land without some type of public action involving condemnation, and the doubtful existence of demand or justification for such a policy.

II. THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT

The housing stock in Albany consists of a body of fairly homogeneous, single-family homes of which over half were constructed prior to 1939. There are two areas of the City in which the housing characteristics differ from the norm: the University Village Married Students Housing, consisting of apartments; and the housing located at the south and east base of Albany Hill where housing units are larger, newer, and more expensive. There are few seriously deteriorated or dilapidated units, and no identifiable areas of blight, although there are certain areas where housing is not maintained as well as others, including older units along Adams Street and Kains Street. As housing ages, it requires maintenance and repair to remain structurally sound and attractive. In recent years there have been changes in the characteristics of the population that have resulted in an increase of renter-occupied units. The large number of renter-occupied single-family homes creates an unusual housing maintenance problem. The age of housing in Albany, correlated with ownership patterns, design of unit and the quality of the surrounding environment indicates that some remedial action will be necessary in order to preserve overall housing quality.

Whereas in the past the composition of the population was relatively stable over time, with a large proportion of the households consisting of families with children, who became, in time, elderly home owners who remained in the community when the children established their own residence, in recent years the elderly home-owners are being replaced by young (under age thirty) renters. These new residents are attracted to the community by the single-family housing and proximity to the University of California, the moderate cost of housing, and the character of the community. Rapid changes in the tenure of the housing stock from owner to renter, especially in the older units, increases the probability that the housing will not be as well maintained as in the past.

In comparison to surrounding communities, most of the housing stock in Albany is reasonably priced. The housing units in University Village are the major source

10 of low income rental housing in Albany, but they are available only to married students at the University of California. The cost of housing and the conditions of the housing market and housing demand are mutually interacting causes and effect. The costs of financing and purchasing a single-family home are increasing rapidly, to the point that, for many, it is no longer possible to purchase a single-family home. The lack of vacant land in the City precludes the possibility of building new single-family homes and increases the competition for the already existing units. Housing costs have increased substantially in recent years for both owner-occupied and rental units. Apartment construction in recent years has formed the bulk of new residential development. Gateview Apartments, located on the west side of Albany Hill, will provide 2,500 condominium units, and is likely to house a population with characteristics significantly different from the existing population.

Given the pattern of development in Albany and the lack of opportunity for new development, it is difficult for Albany to provide a full range of housing types for all socio-economic groups. The availability of low rent student housing (University Village), of moderate cost housing and the high cost housing of the proposed Gateview Apartments does provide representation of both ends of the spectrum of housing types within the community. It would be difficult, given the investment in and costs of private development, as well as the lack of federal funding at this time, to increase the supply of low and moderate income housing in the community. However, Albany can and should undertake programs to preserve the supply of low and moderate cost housing that does exist.

New higher-density development in older residential areas often is unattractive. Exposed parking areas, the lack of landscaping, the lack of design treatment of facades, the discontinuities produced in building setbacks, and the intensive development of small parcels reduce the residential quality of low density areas. New development can and should replace obsolete structures and will improve the overall residential environment if it is appropriately designed to be responsive to the existing scale and residential quality of an area.

POLICY 1: PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK.

a) The City should appoint an Assistant to the City Administrative Officer for Community Development (a Community Services Engineer) with the responsibility for implementing the City's housing policies, of establishing a housing information

system, and providing ongoing monitoring and feedback of the proposed City housing programs, housing legislation programs and potential funding sources. The scope and content of housing programs is constantly changing, as well as the amount of funding available and the procedures for qualifying for funding. Therefore it is necessary to designate a specific staff position to maintain a continuing review of the federal and state programs and the various sources of funding to determine those most appropriate for Albany. This person should have planning experience, familiarity with federal programs, and possess knowledge of building codes, practices and costs of housing repair and maintenance. The person would work with the City Administrative Officer, and would coordinate all activities with the building inspector, who has specific and detailed familiarity with the City codes. Responsibilities for review of new development will be discussed in a later section of the Plan. (See page 57)

b) The City should establish and maintain a housing data base including information on existing housing stock, type, tenure, value of unit, rents, vacancy rate, condition, including the annual summary of new building activity and demolitions, in order to provide an index of changes for inter-censal years. Such a base would provide input into programming for code enforcement and public improvements.

c) The City should use the Zoning Ordinance and map, which express public policy regarding the location and density of housing units, to set the framework for future residential development in the City. Experience has shown that certain zoning provisions can have a negative impact on residential environments, as might be the situation when incompatible uses are allowed in residential areas. Experience in urban areas has further shown that high density zoning in existing low density residential areas has often served to discourage property owners from making improvements to properties, with the belief that at a later date they will convert the property to a multi-unit development. The lack of maintenance can discourage those residents who do wish to maintain their properties. Furthermore, in certain areas, high density residential development is completely out of scale with the existing development, and reduces the overall liveability and attractiveness of a neighborhood.

d) The housing maintenance program should include the following actions that would be coordinated by the Community Services Engineer. These and other housing-related activities would be part of a local Community Development Program which would be funded under the Federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

- Initiate a Code Inspection Program to promote the health and safety of Albany residents. Included within the Code Inspection Program would be the responsibility for implementing a structural hazards abatement program (See Seismic Safety Policy #3).
- Establish a Code for Repairs. The International Conference of Building Officials is preparing a draft model rehabilitation code that would permit restoration of structures to their original condition, rather than requiring conformance to current standards, thereby ensuring that hazardous and sub-standard conditions would be eliminated, and that the unit conforms to the housing code.
- Develop a program of supportive service, including instruction programs to assist home owners in performing certain types of repair work, perhaps in coordination with the Albany Adult Evening School Program, and a tool bank available on a rotating basis to homeowners.
- Provide information to home owners regarding funds available for rehabilitation, including mortgage refinancing, second deeds of trust, FHA Title I Home Improvement Program, and loans obtainable from finance companies.
- Establish a revolving fund for repair and demolition to be used in coordination with the proposed Code Inspection Program, making loans available to property owners who are unable to afford to bring their buildings into conformity with code standards. A limit for loans could be established, with the stipulation that loans be repaid within a given period of time. The fund would replenish itself as the loans were repaid.
- Plant street trees as part of the residential improvement program, in areas where landscaping is deficient and where trees can increase the attractiveness of the residential environment.

e) The City's Community Development Program would greatly improve the quality of the residential environment in Albany. In order to develop such a program the residential areas of the City were analyzed as regards type, age, tenure, condition, density, vacant land, adjacent uses, as well as the need and potential for rehabilitation and the probable economic future of buildings during the plan period of twenty years. From this analysis, sub-areas with similar characteris-

tics were identified, and programs identified to respond to the particular profile of each area. The treatment areas developed in the analysis are illustrated in Map 1, and the appropriate Treatment Type is indicated in Table 1. Four treatment categories were developed:

TREATMENT TYPE A.

No housing rehabilitation needed. Standards for future development should ensure that new development is in scale with and complementary to existing development.

TREATMENT TYPE B.

Housing in the areas indicated is basically sound, attractive, and the public improvements are adequate. Some street tree planting should improve areas where it is now insufficient.

TREATMENT TYPE C.

Buildings are in need of some repairs. The higher rate of rental occupancy indicates a need for more stringent housing maintenance. New development in areas adjacent to San Pablo Avenue, and the traffic generated by commercial uses on Solano Avenue adversely affect the residential environment. Single-family housing is the predominant housing type. A Code Inspection Program should be initiated in these areas.

TREATMENT TYPE D.

A concentrated housing maintenance program including all the actions recommended as part of this program should be initiated in those areas identified for this treatment type. These areas would be identified as the highest priority treatment areas for public action and commitment of resources, with a program including housing inspection, initiation of a loan program, counseling, tool bank, and similar actions. A concentrated street tree planting program would be initiated in these areas, and street improvements made where necessary. In areas where commercial properties extend back to the rear lot on Adams Street, the potential for some landscaping to visually shield parking areas and fences from view should be studied.

TABLE 1 RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT

Treatment Area ^a	Treatment Type	Existing Densities (D.U./net acre)
1	B	10.8
2	B	10.6
3	C	13.8
4	D	13.9
5	C	11.5
6	D	16.5
7 ^b	none	
8	C	14.7
9	A	10.4
10	C	12.1
11	none	mixed residential commercial development
12	A	27.5
13	none	undeveloped
14	none	condominium
15	none	undeveloped

a. See Map 1 for location and boundaries of treatment areas.

b. Consists of University Village, University of California property.
No treatment recommended.

POLICY 2: ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING.

The Association of Bay Area Governments has recommended a housing allocation system for the San Francisco Bay Region, in order to distribute federal housing subsidies proportionally among localities in the Bay Area. Albany should support and adopt this approach to distribution of funds, if federal subsidies to low and moderate income housing, rehabilitation code enforcement and rent subsidies are reinstituted, or if funds become available from other sources.

POLICY 3: ENSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE EXISTING SCALE AND CHARACTER OF THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT.

a) Amend the Zoning Ordinance to specify the design review procedure to ensure that new development is compatible with existing residential development. Such a review would consider the functional and aesthetic relationships to the surrounding environment in order to further enhance the City's appearance and livability, as well as the usefulness of properties. The Ordinance should specify the information required and the criteria to be applied in considering applications for design review approval.*

b) In order to allow some flexibility in the development of residential units amend the Zoning Ordinance to include a Planned Unit Development (PUD) procedure. The Planned Unit Development procedure would be allowed in all residential districts to promote flexibility of design. It must be clearly specified that such an approach is only usable in order to: a) increase available usable open space in a development, or b) provide flexible design such as town-house development. It cannot be used to increase density in residential areas, to reduce parking requirements, or to allow for uses not already within the category. Existing setbacks on residential streets must be maintained, and new development should incorporate all requirements of the building code and electrical code. Any development consisting of at least 7,500 square feet in the Moderate Density Residential areas or 10,000 square feet in the High Density Residential areas shall be a planned unit development.

c) Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require usable open space for each dwelling

* See Chapter VI, The Planning Process

unit in all multi-family residential districts. Albany has a limited amount of open space available, and therefore it is desirable to encourage the development of private open space in order to accommodate increased densities in residential areas. It is recommended that a minimum of either 200 square feet of usable common open space or 100 square feet of balcony area should be provided for each apartment unit. All common open space should be improved for recreational use, and may include covered recreation areas, but not sideyard space unless contiguous with usable open space, and not parking areas.

d) Amend the Zoning Ordinance to limit the access to parking to a reasonable portion of the street frontage. It is recommended that parking areas be screened and enclosed by landscaping.

e) Designate as commercial expansion zones the entire length of the east side of Adams Street and the west side of Kains street.

f) It is recommended that Article 2.1, Section 3 (3.1) be deleted from the Zoning Ordinance. This section allows hotels, motels, and accessory uses in residential (single-family) districts. Such uses are incompatible with the existing character of single-family areas in Albany. The Ordinance should be amended to include hotels and motels under uses allowed in C-2 and commercial expansion districts, as long as frontage is on San Pablo Avenue.

g) Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require provision of 1.5 parking spaces per apartment unit. This requirement may be relaxed for senior citizen housing or if access to public transit is readily available.

POLICY 4: ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIPLE UNITS ON CONSOLIDATED LOTS.

a) This can be accomplished by relating allowable density to lot size. In R-3 districts, the allowable density per square foot of lot size would increase as the lot size increases, offering a bonus in density to developers of large lots. Such development creates a more desirable pattern of buildings, since it produces a continuous facade, and discourages the high density building on narrow lots.

b) New high-density residential development should be located in areas with access to public transportation, commercial facilities and public services, as

18 well as having a minimum impact on established single-family residential areas.

c) The following maximum densities should be permitted:

TABLE 2 RESIDENTIAL DENSITY BY ZONING CATEGORY AND LOT SIZE

Parcel Size (square feet)	R-2 Zoning		R-3 Zoning	
	Allowable Units	D.U. per Acre	Allowable Units	D.U. per Acre
5,000	4	34.8	4	34.8
7,500	6	34.8	8	46.5
10,000	8	34.8	13	56.6
15,000 or more	According to lot size	34.8	According to lot size	69.7

III. THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

In recent years, the State Legislature has passed several bills requiring that cities adopt a more comprehensive approach in developing their General Plans, and that they consider the importance of the natural environment in planning. State Law now requires adoption of an open space element and a conservation element, as well as consistency of the zoning ordinance with the general plan (Government Code, Sections 65563 and 65853). In recognition of the relationship between land use planning and environmental hazards, the State also requires the preparation of a seismic safety element (Government Code, Sections 65302 (f) and 65302.2) and a safety element (Government Code, Section 65302.1). This requirement directs local government to identify and evaluate environmental hazards, and to formulate policies, regulations and programs to reduce risk. The legislation places the responsibility of protecting public safety and minimizing property damage on the local government.

In view of the above legislative mandate and in response to the particular local characteristics of the community, this chapter of the General Plan includes open space and conservation, seismic safety, and safety. Separating discrete portions of the environment from one another is essentially an artificial device, which allows one to make certain decisions in regard to particular issues such as seismic safety, or preservation of open space. However, it should be kept in mind that areas such as Albany Hill or the shoreline embody issues which are pertinent to open space, as well as to conservation, and to seismic safety also. The approach of this section of the Plan will be to attempt to integrate these issues. The Open Space and Conservation portion of the Natural Environment chapter of the General Plan considers two types of open space applicable to Albany: the first deals with public open space for recreational activities, including all the city parks; the second deals with open space used for areas of outstanding natural, scenic, or cultural value. This category includes the Bay shoreline, Codornices Creek and Cerrito Creek, as well as portions of Albany Hill. The wildlife that exists in Albany consists of birds who feed in the marsh

along the shoreline and natural vegetation which is concentrated on portions of Albany Hill that remain undeveloped. The preservation of certain natural resources is the responsibility of regional agencies, whose jurisdictions supersede the local agency. Therefore the Bay Conservation and Development Commission is responsible for the conservation and development of the Bay, the Bay Area Air Quality Control Board for air quality, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board for water quality.

A. OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

Albany contains a total of 29.6 acres of public open space. The scarcity of vacant land in the community limits the potential for new, large recreation areas. Surveys conducted in 1969 as part of the Parks and Recreation Plan indicate respondent preferences for the following types of neighborhood recreation facilities: space for free play, family picnic areas, children's playlots, a neighborhood center building, as well as a nature hobby area. Respondents also indicated a desire for a swimming pool and community recreation facilities. Since the completion of this survey the City has acquired several additional open space areas including the Albany Hill Overlook Park (5.2 acres) and the Creekside Park (4 acres), and plans to purchase a portion of the Gill Tract adjacent to the Middle School site (3 acres). The BART linear park, (5.5 acres) owned by BART and maintained by the City, provides additional open space.

While there is very little vacant land within the central portions of the City to provide additional recreation areas, there are several natural areas which offer opportunities for open space that should be preserved and protected. These include the Bay shoreline, the undeveloped portions of Albany Hill, and Cerrito Creek and Codornices Creek. Existing and proposed open space and conservation areas are delineated in Map 2. In view of the existing public open space, the opportunities for new open space, and the desirability of conserving and protecting the natural areas in Albany the following statements of public policy are appropriate.

POLICY 1: IMPROVE EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES.

The City should complete improvements scheduled in Memorial Park and Tevlin Park as indicated in the Parks and Recreation Plan. These parks, centrally located,



MAP 2 OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

-  OPEN SPACE - RECREATION
-  OPEN SPACE - CONSERVATION
-  CREEK SIDE CONSERVATION (GENERALIZED)
-  ALBANY ISLES PLAN

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22 provide much-needed neighborhood recreation facilities.

POLICY 2: DEVELOP NEW RECREATION FACILITIES IN COORDINATION WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WHERE APPROPRIATE.

Acquire the portion of the Gill Tract adjacent to the Middle School Park site, and develop recreation facilities on the site in coordination with the Unified School District.

POLICY 3: RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SHORELINE AS AN OPEN SPACE OF SCENIC BEAUTY, AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE SHORELINE FOR RECREATIONAL USE.

a) The City should investigate ways of providing access to the shoreline, and the means of developing a walkway along the shoreline that can be used and enjoyed by residents of the City. The City should negotiate with Golden Gate Fields to provide public access to the shoreline in the areas behind the race track, between the Buchanan Street Interchange and the area where the flat portion of the shoreline ends. A 50 foot-wide walkway and a bike path could be established and used by the public when the track was not in season.

b) Preserve the scenic value of the shoreline by prohibiting the construction of any building or structure within 100 feet of the shoreline, except as specified in the Albany Isles Plan. This can be accomplished by an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

c) Recognize the value of the Hoffman Marsh off the shoreline, located north and west of the Buchanan Street Interchange, and prohibit any activity in that area that would disturb the bird feeding activities. The Marine Environmental Impact Analysis: Widening Route 17 Along Shoreline of Richmond, California states: "Regional comparisons of the Hoffman Boulevard mud flat and salt marsh appear to rank it as one of the highest shorebird use areas within the state, and perhaps within San Francisco Bay, although its size and attractions would seem to be of lesser quality than many other areas."* Any public access to the shoreline should

* URS Research Company: Marine Environmental Impact Analysis: Widening Route 17 Along Shoreline of Richmond, California, p. 36, September 1973, San Mateo, California.

avoid intrusion upon this area.

POLICY 4: PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE CREEKS IN ALBANY.

Codornices Creek forms the southern border of Albany, and Cerrito Creek the northern boundary, separating the City from the neighboring communities. Over time both creeks have been ignored, and urban development has destroyed much of the natural beauty these areas possessed. The City should attempt to restore these creeks to their previous natural state, to protect the creekway in areas where it has not been culverted. The following actions are recommended:

- a) Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require that buildings or structures must be located at least 20 feet away from the creek bank.
- b) Enforce more stringently the provision in the City Code requiring that property owners keep creek channels clean, especially near the El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center.
- c) Protect natural creekside vegetation in the area of Creekside Park. Keep improvements to the minimum required to provide sitting areas. Acquire the undeveloped portion of the creek located near Tevlin Street as public open space.
- d) Investigate the possibility of replanting near the creek in areas where natural vegetation has been completely destroyed. Such a project could be undertaken by a conservation group or as a school project or in coordination with the University of California. The area where this would be particularly appropriate would be on the portion of the Codornices Creek that runs west of San Pablo Avenue, adjacent to the University of California University Village property. If the University develops that portion of the property which borders the creek, it should be encouraged to landscape the creekside area.

POLICY 5: PROTECT VIEWS OF THE CITY AND THE SCENIC VALUE OF UNDEVELOPED PORTIONS OF ALBANY HILL.

Any new development on the east portion of the hill should be designed in such a way as to preserve the native vegetation of the hill, and preserve the form of the hill. Amend the Zoning Ordinance, under Hillside Control District, to require

a use permit to remove any trees on the hill. All development should be sited to preserve the trees on the hill. Grading on the east side of the hill other than within a PUD, or other construction, should be subject to Planning and Zoning Commission approval.

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit development of the area 200 feet west of the ridgeline identified on the Open Space and Conservation Map to preserve the view from the top of the hill.

POLICY 6: RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF LANDSCAPING IN PROVIDING A SENSE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RELIEF FROM URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AS WELL AS INCREASING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL AREAS, AND OF PROVIDING VISUAL INTEREST TO THE COMMUNITY.

In areas lacking trees and landscaping the City should encourage street tree planting to increase the attractiveness of residential areas. The City could provide a variety of trees to home-owners at cost and dig required holes when a group of neighbors are able to coordinate their actions. Such an approach would encourage improvements on a block basis and thereby increase the attractiveness of a neighborhood. The City could require that owners sign an agreement to maintain trees for a certain period of time, such as the period required for a tree to become well established.

B. SEISMIC SAFETY

The Seismic Safety portion of the General Plan identifies seismic hazards, defined as sources of seismically-induced danger for injury or damage to man and/or property. The City of Albany is situated in a region affected by two major fault zones - the San Andreas Fault, about 15 miles to the west, and the Hayward Fault, about one mile to the east. Major earthquakes have occurred historically along each fault, and seismic data and geologic information indicate that future severe earthquakes are capable of being generated. It is impossible to precisely predict the magnitude and occurrence of an earthquake; however, it can be expected that major earthquakes will occur and cause severe damage.

A report prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 1972 entitled A Study of Earthquake Forces in the San Francisco Bay Area described the ground shaking intensity to be expected if seismic activity were to occur along

the San Andreas and Hayward Faults. The intensity for a given area was chiefly a function of the distance from the earthquake and the generalized local geologic conditions. Three intensity maps were prepared - for magnitudes 8.3, 7.0 and 6.0 on the Richter scale, to be intended for use as a "...general guide to the probable distribution of intensity in the specified earthquake. For a detailed evaluation of a particular site such maps must be used in conjunction with other geological and engineering data that may be available." The maps indicate that at any given magnitude, the intensity on bay mud and fill areas will be much more severe than elsewhere. Using the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale (see Table 3), it was determined that a magnitude 8.3 earthquake (equivalent to the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake) would produce in Albany an intensity of IX in the area generally west of I-80, and an intensity of VIII to the east. At a magnitude 6 earthquake, the western area would have an intensity of VII, and the area to the east an intensity of VI.

Table 4 indicates potential seismic hazards in Albany and areas where such hazards are likely to occur; the location of hazards in Albany are illustrated in Map 3. The table provides generalized information only, and detailed studies of specific sites are necessary to determine the extent of hazard. Guidelines for the seismic safety and safety elements of the General Plan require that communities define a level of acceptable risk which reduces the loss of life and property damage due to seismic activity to an acceptable level. Because Map 3 identifies only very generalized areas susceptible to seismic hazards, it does not seem appropriate to establish levels of risk based on permitted land uses in the various seismic hazard areas. Rather, such levels of acceptable risk should define the kinds of site studies to be done prior to development.

In Albany, by coincidence, the areas that are undeveloped are also those areas that are most susceptible to seismic-geologic hazards, including the bay fill areas, potential bay fill areas, and the undeveloped portions of Albany Hill. The plan recommendations suggest studies for those areas which will identify the type of risk on particular properties as well as indicate actions that may be taken to reduce the risk. In existing developed areas, the standards of the 1973 Building Code, representing the best thinking of the current state of the art, are recommended to insure that any new development will structurally withstand earthquake damage.

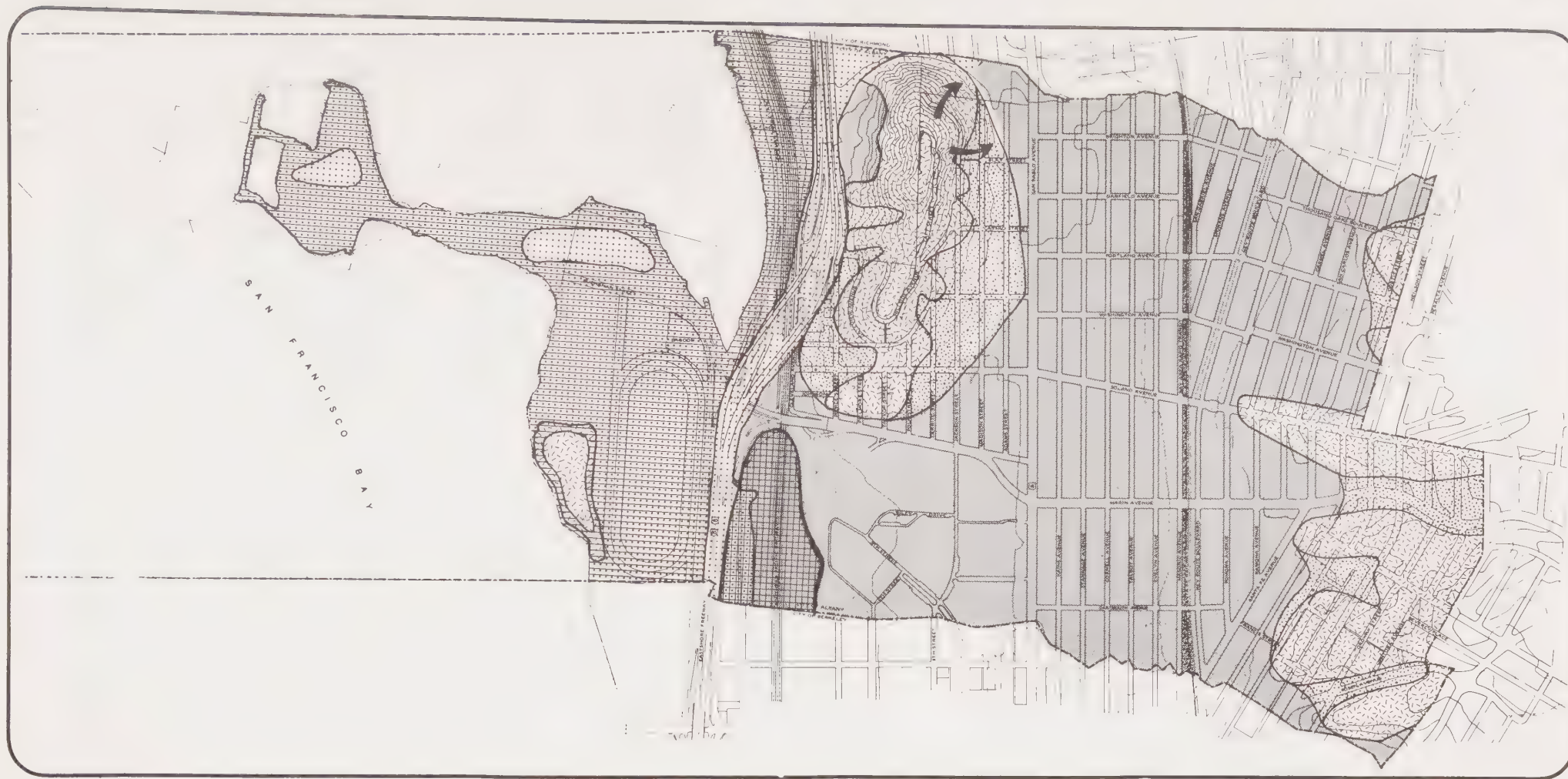
TABLE 3 MODIFIED MERCALLI INTENSITY SCALE (1931)

-
- I. Not felt except by a very few under especially favorable circumstances.
 - II. Felt only by a few persons at rest, especially on upper floors of buildings. Delicately suspended objects may swing.
 - III. Felt quite noticeably indoors, especially on upper floors of buildings, but many people do not recognize it as an earthquake. Standing motor cars may rock slightly. Vibration like passing of truck. Duration estimated.
 - IV. During the day felt indoors by many, outdoors by few. At night some awakened. Dishes, windows, doors disturbed; walls make cracking sound. Sensation like heavy truck striking building. Standing motor cars rocked noticeably.
 - V. Felt by nearly everyone; many awakened. Some dishes, windows, etc., broken; a few instances of cracked plaster; unstable objects overturned. Disturbance of trees, poles and other tall objects sometimes noticed. Pendulum clocks may stop.
 - VI. Felt by all, many frightened and run outdoors. Some heavy furniture moved; a few instances of fallen plaster or damaged chimneys. Damage slight.
 - VII. Everybody runs outdoors. Damage negligible in buildings of good design and construction; slight to moderate in well-built ordinary structures; considerable in poorly built or badly designed structures; some chimneys broken. Noticed by persons driving motor cars.
 - VIII. Damage slight in specially designed structures; considerable in ordinary substantial buildings with partial collapse; great in poorly built structures. Panel walls thrown out of frame structures. Fall of chimneys, factory stacks, columns, monuments, walls. Heavy furniture overturned. Sand and mud ejected in small amounts. Changes in well water. Disturbs persons driving motor cars.
 - IX. Damage considerable in specially designed structures; well designed frame structures thrown out of plumb; great in substantial buildings, with partial collapse. Buildings shifted off foundations. Ground cracked conspicuously. Underground pipes broken.
 - X. Some well-built wooden structures destroyed; most masonry and frame structures destroyed with their foundations; ground badly cracked. Rails bent. Landslides considerable from river banks and steep slopes. Shifted sand and mud. Water splashed (slopped) over banks.
 - XI. Few, if any (masonry) structures remain standing. Bridges destroyed. Broad fissures in ground. Underground pipe lines completely out of service. Earth slumps and land slips in soft ground. Rails bent greatly.
 - XII. Damage total. Waves seen on ground surfaces. Lines of sight and level distorted. Objects thrown upward into the air.
-

NOTE: Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale is usually given in Roman Numerals.

TABLE 4 IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

Type of Hazard	Area in Albany Potentially Susceptible to Hazard
Ground Shaking - can be felt at great distances from earthquake center; in Bay Area can be expected to be strong during magnitude 7.3 and stronger earthquakes.	Bay muds west of I-80; fill areas over bay mud; alluvial soils between the Bay and the Berkeley Hills (requires site evaluation).
Ground Failure - a. liquefaction (loss of strength in water-saturated cohesionless soil during strong ground shaking).	Dependent on depth of water table; depth of sand, gravel, or silt deposits that may be present; presence of a free face toward which soil would flow; and the maximum probable severity of earthquake ground motion. (Requires detailed site evaluation.)
b. lateral spreading and earth lurching (movement and cracking of soils during strong ground shaking).	Occurs in areas susceptible to liquefaction (requires evaluation of soil liquefaction data).
c. landsliding (most likely to occur on weakly consolidated soils or rock mantle, on steep slopes, and saturated earth materials).	Albany Hill, particularly steep slopes, existing unstable slopes, and areas of heavily-fractured and jointed rocks.
d. differential settlement (non-uniform compaction of loose- to medium-dense granular soils during strong ground shaking).	Filled areas over bay mud and former sloughs; areas underlain by peat and sand bases.
Seismically-triggered Flooding - Tsunami (long sea waves caused by under-water seismic disturbances).	Elevations less than ten feet, particularly low waterfront areas.



MAP 3 SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARD SUSCEPTIBILITY

- | | |
|---|--|
|  BEDROCK |  INUNDATION BY 100-YEAR FLOOD |
|  ALLUVIUM |  INUNDATION BY 200-YEAR TSUNAMI |
|  COLLUVIUM |  HISTORIC LANDSLIDES |
|  FILL OVER BAY MUD | |

THIS MAP IS BASED ON INFORMATION COMPILED FROM
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES
PLANNING STUDY.
MAPS ENTITLED: MISC. FIELD STUDIES MAPS 429, 480, & 493;
INTERPRETIVE REPORT NO. 4.

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POLICY 1: UTILIZE AVAILABLE GEOLOGIC DATA AT ALL STAGES OF PLANNING AND THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, IN AREAS INDICATED ON THE SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS SUSCEPTIBILITY MAP AND IDENTIFIED IN TABLE 4.

- a) Such data should be as detailed as possible for the preparation and revision of Zoning and Grading ordinances.
- b) Geologic-engineering site studies should be required for proposed developments within various hazard areas indicated on Map 3.

POLICY 2: ADOPT THE LATEST BUILDING CODE STANDARDS TO ENSURE STRUCTURAL SAFETY.

- a) The Albany City Code currently incorporates the 1970 Uniform Building Code as the adopted "Building Code" of the City (Article II, Building Code, Section 7.8). It is recommended that Albany adopt the latest Uniform Building Code and the Recommended Lateral Force Requirements and Commentary prepared by the Structural Engineers Association of California as part of the City's "Building Code".
- b) The City should prepare Specific Plans (Section 65450.1 et. seq., Government Code; Sections 11526 and 11549.5, Business and Professional Code); and subsequent amendments thereto to define the specific seismic hazard conditions to be mitigated by potential developers prior to development.

POLICY 3: INITIATE A STRUCTURAL HAZARDS ABATEMENT PROGRAM.

- a) The Albany City Council should authorize the proposed Community Services Engineer in coordination with a structural engineer to determine the significant structural hazard problems of the City, including those posed by structurally unsound residences, public buildings and other public facilities, and structural appendages such as large signs and marquees; and to formulate an abatement program tailored to solve those more specific problems with highest priority for structural hazards abatement, especially critical public buildings such as emergency facilities, utilities, and structures characterized by involuntary and high occupancy. In addition, because of the potential for a future earthquake of up to a magnitude of 8.3 on the Richter scale in the Bay Area, it is

30 recommended that reinforced masonry structures constructed in Albany be inspected to insure that they are in fact designed to resist lateral forces sufficiently to allow continued occupancy in the event of an 8.3 earthquake. A building found to be structurally unsafe should be removed or brought to acceptable standards. It should be acceptable to change the use of the building to one of a less critical nature, if this use is consistent with the overall General Plan.

A structure that is determined to be non-conforming to existing seismic safety standards may not necessitate immediate removal. In such cases, the following requirements should be imposed:

- If the building is damaged to more than a specified percent of its value, its use(s) should be terminated.
- The building itself should not be structurally expanded or attachments made thereon unless such expansion or attachments satisfy all existing building codes and their structural integrity is uncompromised by the portions of the building designated as non-conforming.
- In those cases where a change in use in terms of its occupancy characteristics is not practical or possible, the use of the building should be terminated after a certain period of time based on an equitable amortization schedule, and the existing uses designated as non-conforming acceptable risks should not be expanded in any way.

POLICY 4: GUIDELINES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED FOR THE TYPE OF FILL TO BE ALLOWED FOR FILLING MUD FLATS, SUBMERGED LAND AND SOFT LOW LANDS IN RELATION TO THE LAND USES FOR WHICH THE VARIOUS TYPES OF FILL CAN BE UTILIZED.

Because of the risk from seismic hazards and the potential for economic loss to individual homeowners as a result of settlement and differential settlement, no residential development should be permitted in such areas.

Specific site studies, in particular for ground shaking and slope instability, should be required for development proposals on Albany Hill.

C. SAFETY

All general plans must have a safety element which deals with the dangers posed by fire and geologic hazards. Non-seismic geologic hazards in Albany are limited to areas susceptible to slope instability on Albany Hill.* The City is also fortunate in regard to fire hazards, as there are no extensive grasslands or wooded areas that would present severe fire danger (Albany Hill, the major open area in Albany, is well-supplied with water). There are no PG&E gas storage tanks in Albany, nor are there any firms which manufacture or store explosive or flammable chemicals.

Fire protection under normal circumstances is provided by the Albany Fire Department. Albany has cooperative agreements with the Cities of Berkeley, El Cerrito, and Richmond, for dealing with large fires or fires at or near the City boundaries. The danger of extensive fires in the developed portions of the City is greatest in the event of a major earthquake, when there is a possibility that gas mains and water mains would both be ruptured, and the fire departments of all the adjoining cities would also be as overworked as the Albany Fire Department. The small lot sizes in Albany can contribute to the spread of fire, particularly from garage to garage.

Water in Albany is provided by the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD). EBMUD reserves are adequate to fill all needs short of a regional catastrophe, such as an earthquake. Albany is supplied by reservoirs east of the Berkeley Hills, but in case those lines are broken, emergency supplies can be obtained via lines through El Sobrante. Again, the only situation in which the alternate supply line is likely to be needed is after a severe earthquake.

Evacuation of residents from hazardous areas is also most likely to be necessary after a severe earthquake. In such a situation, it must be assumed that the freeways (I-80 and Route 17) will be unusable due to bridge and overpass failures. Thus, San Pablo Avenue in a north-south direction, and Solano and Marin Avenues in an east-west direction, would have to be used. These streets are all of adequate width to serve as evacuation routes. However, travel to the east may be impossible, as the Hayward Fault lies in that direction and if any surface

* For a more complete discussion of relevant geological conditions, see the Seismic Safety Element.

32 streets are impassable it would most likely be those nearer the fault. Also, it is possible that the overhead BART structure would collapse and block Solano and Marin Avenues.

The Alameda County Office of Emergency Preparedness has adopted an emergency plan. Albany's City Code also adopts an emergency plan, which is spelled out in a resolution adopted concurrently with that section of the code.

POLICY 1: MAINTAIN COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH FIRE DEPARTMENTS OF NEIGHBORING CITIES.

POLICY 2: CONTINUALLY UPDATE THE CITY'S EMERGENCY PLAN TO ASSURE THAT IT COMPLEMENTS THAT OF ALAMEDA COUNTY.

POLICY 3: REVIEW ALL CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR GARAGES IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF FIRES.

POLICY 4: INITIATE A STRUCTURAL HAZARD ABATEMENT PROGRAM TO REMOVE UNSAFE, FIRE-PRONE STRUCTURES.

This action should be coordinated with the housing maintenance and code enforcement programs suggested under the Residential Environment chapter and the Structural Hazard Abatement Program recommended in the Seismic Safety section.

IV. CIRCULATION

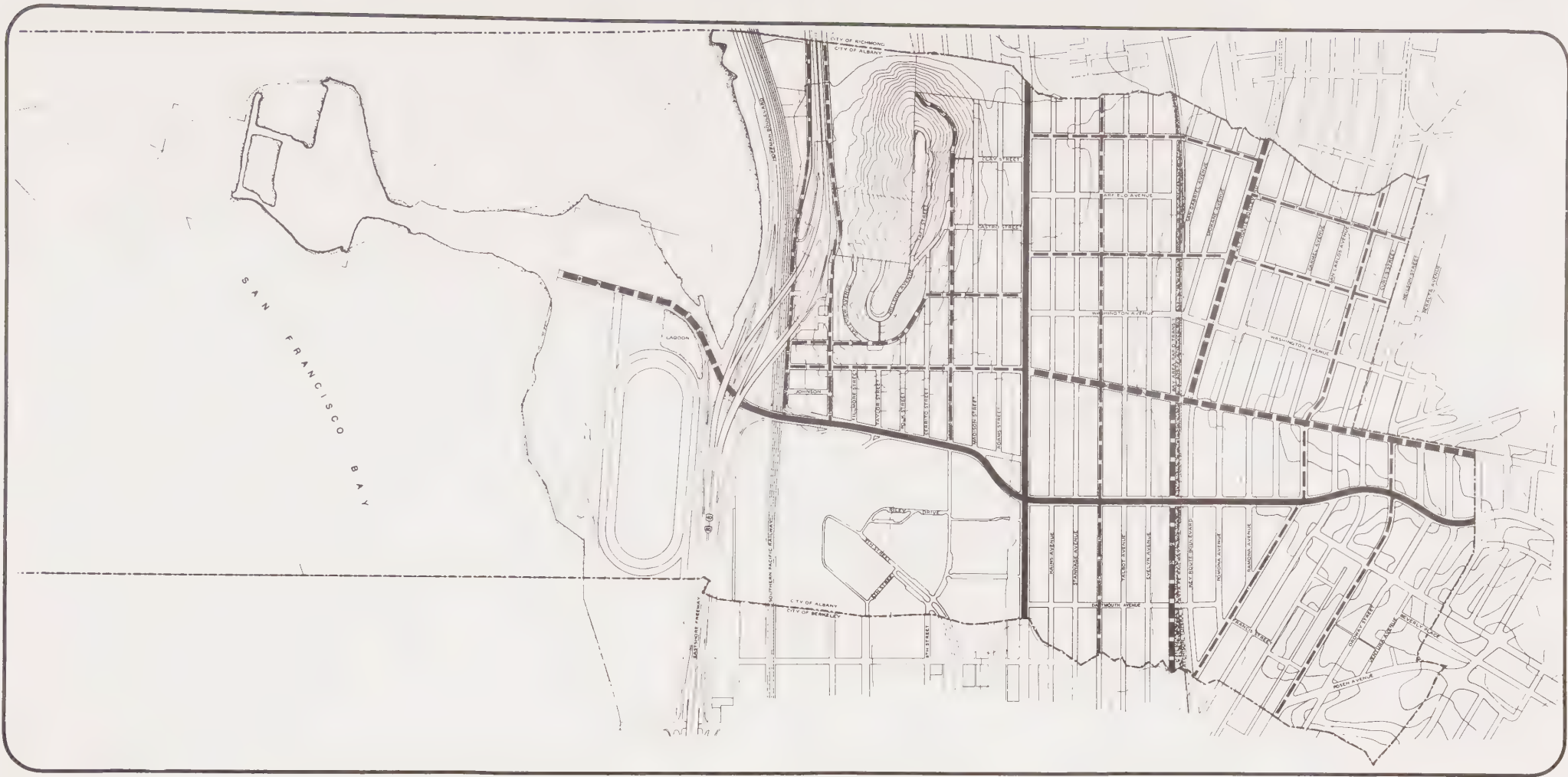
The Circulation Element, as defined by the Government Code (Sec. 65302) should spell out "The general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the general plan."

This chapter of the General Plan includes traffic and circulation, the scenic highways element, bicycle trails and the noise element.

A. TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

The circulation pattern in Albany has been established by the history and type of development and street patterns in the East Bay, and is characteristic of a residential community within a larger urban area. The Eastshore Freeway (Interstate 80), carrying north-south traffic, links Albany with adjacent East Bay communities. State Highway 17 provides a traffic link to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. The interchange of these two routes with Buchanan Street should be studied for possible improvements when the Albany Waterfront is developed. Improved access across the freeway by pedestrians and bicycles should be addressed.

In general, streets within Albany consist of relatively narrow, local streets, many considered substandard in width according to state definition. The east-west streets link the Berkeley Hills and adjacent portions of Kensington and Thousand Oaks to San Pablo Avenue and the freeway interchange at Buchanan Street. The north-south streets, excluding Key Route Boulevard, San Pablo Avenue and Masonic Avenue, carry light residential traffic. The narrow width of the streets, the fact that several of the streets end at the Albany border and do not link to other areas, and the presence of stop signs on every corner serve to discourage through-traffic in residential neighborhoods.



MAP 4 CIRCULATION

- COLLECTOR
- MINOR ARTERIAL
- TYPE IV NON FREEWAY

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POLICY 1: MAINTAIN THE PROTECTED CHARACTER OF RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS. DISCOURAGE STREET WIDENING IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS. CHANNEL TRAFFIC TO COLLECTOR AND ARTERIAL STREETS. ADOPT THE FUNCTIONAL STREET CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM INDICATED IN MAP 4.

POLICY 2: ACCOMMODATE THROUGH-TRAFFIC FLOW, PARTICULARLY ON SAN PABLO AVENUE, SOLANO AVENUE, AND MARIN AVENUE, WITH A MINIMUM ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE CITY.

a) Marin Avenue: This street serves as a major link for east-west movement through the City between the eastern residential areas and the Buchanan Street Interchange and the Eastshore Freeway. Passing through a residential area east of San Pablo Avenue, with posted speed limits of 25 miles per hour, traffic often speeds through the area creating potential danger for pedestrians and school children from Marin School. There are no viable alternatives for rerouting traffic from this street to reduce the impact on the neighborhood; therefore the only alternative is to slow traffic so that pedestrians may cross the street where necessary.

Any modification to Marin Avenue not only has to consider the necessity of protecting pedestrians in crosswalks, but also must provide a smooth flow of traffic, and avoidance of traffic congestion or unnecessary impediments to traffic that create the potential for automobile accidents.

In order to provide safety for pedestrians the City should strictly enforce the 25 m.p.h. speed limit. Pedestrians have difficulty crossing due to the width of the street. Small pedestrian islands in the center of the street at appropriate intersections would allow shelter for the pedestrian. A yellow flashing light on the island would increase the visibility of the pedestrian crossing to approaching motorists.

b) Solano Avenue: Improvements to this street have added parking bays along the length of the street, curb improvements and street widening to improve the flow of traffic. The development of this street as a commercial and office center requires adequate provision for slower moving traffic, for parking and pedestrian movement. In order to insure safety of pedestrians and to emphasize the pedestrian-oriented commercial character of the street, curb cuts on Solano Avenue should be minimized. Parking for commercial structures should be placed at the

36 rear of commercial parcels. Buildings should not be set-back from Solano Avenue, and should continue the pedestrian commercial orientation of this street, except when pedestrian amenities are reinforced and further emphasized.

c) San Pablo Avenue: This roadway, U.S. Highway 40, prior to the construction of the Eastshore Freeway was the major north-south highway in the East Bay. Albany is reluctant to accept the State offer to transfer title of this street to the City due to the inadequate design of the roadway at this time and the cost of maintenance. The land use pattern along San Pablo reflects the character of the road as a major highway and arterial. Consisting of six lanes of moving traffic and two of parking, the street is developed with a variety of automobile-oriented retail facilities and signs that present a generally unattractive appearance for most of its length through the City. A 1972 report* on pedestrian safety in Albany indicated that the occurrence of accidents involving pedestrian injuries at signaled intersections was unusually high in Albany, especially at San Pablo Avenue crossings. The pattern of east-west street crossings at San Pablo Avenue is made difficult by the lack of direct crossing at all but Solano and Marin Avenues. The width of travel lanes is ten feet, while State standards recommend twelve feet per lane. The location of City Hall, the new Middle School site and the proposed open space adjacent to the school site indicate a change of use in the area adjacent to the Avenue, and increased traffic and pedestrian activity generated by these new uses. In view of the traffic constraints on San Pablo Avenue, the changed role of the street from a regional highway to an arterial of more local status, and the relation of the street to the commercial and residential areas of the City it is recommended that the street be redesigned to serve the following purposes:

- to increase the safety of vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles on the street;
- to improve the visual appearance of the street;
- to improve the appearance and vitality of the commercial environment.

* American Automobile Association: 1972 Pedestrian Safety Program Appraisal; Albany, California.

Street improvements should include:

- A reduction in the number of traffic lanes to two moving lanes in each direction, and an increase in the width of each lane to 12 feet.
- An improvement in the visual appearance of the street by planting shrubs and small street trees, developing bus shelters and kiosks of attractive design, encouraging the development of common parking areas for block units with access from adjoining streets, and providing a median with left turn lanes where appropriate to separate moving lanes of traffic.

The Cities of Berkeley and El Cerrito are both proposing plans for the improvement of San Pablo Avenue that would incorporate several of the design and traffic improvements suggested above. The street improvements could be financed by use of S.B. 325 money, or from Federal Aid Urban System monies; however, such improvements are expensive and other sources of revenue such as a special assessment district may be necessary to make the recommended improvements.

POLICY 3: LOCAL STREETS SHOULD REINFORCE THE RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER OF NEIGHBORHOODS.

Local streets in Albany, located between San Pablo Avenue and Masonic Avenue, are narrow in width, and make two-way travel difficult. The narrowness of the public right-of-way precludes the possibility of widening these streets, which carry local traffic generated by the generally low density residential uses in the area. Where possible local streets should be used to reinforce residential areas, by keeping out through-traffic, slowing down traffic and diverting traffic to the collector streets. Improvements to these streets should not permit any increase in traffic volumes.

POLICY 4: PROVIDE A VARIETY OF PUBLIC TRANSIT MODES TO ENCOURAGE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND REDUCE RELIANCE ON AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL.

Albany is served by A.C. Transit which operates eleven bus routes in the City, and by BART with the nearest station located at the El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center, adjacent to Albany. In order to provide more flexible transit service,

38 the City should study the feasibility of establishing a Dial-a-bus system to provide flexible service for areas within the City not served by the established bus routes. Most of the public transit routes provide service on San Pablo Avenue. Bus service on Solano Avenue is infrequent and connections to other parts of the City are difficult. Therefore a Dial-a-bus service would provide public transit to areas not adequately serviced by existing public transit lines. It would particularly benefit the elderly and physically handicapped residents who are not able to walk the distances to bus stops, and who have fewer transportation alternatives available to them.

An alternative to a Dial-a-bus system would be a shuttle bus that would link major points in the City including the Civic Center, University Village, Solano Avenue, the BART station, and the waterfront when that area is developed for recreational use. Such a service could operate a loop route, in one direction, since the loop could be completed in a short period of time given the size of the community.

B. SCENIC HIGHWAYS

State Route 17 (Hoffman Boulevard) and Interstate Route 80 border the San Francisco Bay shoreline for the length of Albany, and provide motorists with views of Mt. Tamalpais, the Golden Gate Bridge and the San Francisco Bay, and immediate views of Albany Hill and distant vistas to the east. North of Buchanan Street Interchange, Route 80 passes the industrial uses located on the "island" created by the Southern Pacific Tracks and the freeway. These uses, which consist of one story industrial uses and the railroad yard, present an unattractive appearance to passing motorists.

The State Scenic Highways Master Plan does not include any route in Albany for designation as an official state scenic highway. Scenic highway designation is not recommended for Albany routes. However, it is recommended that the visual quality of this corridor be preserved to the west and improved east of Route 17 and adjacent to Route 80.

POLICY 1: RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE VISUAL AMENITIES FROM ROUTES 17 AND 80.

a) Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require that industrial uses and railroad operations located adjacent to the freeways provide landscaping or be of high design

quality to shield the negative visual aspects of the industrial areas. Such landscaping should consist of shrubs and trees of sufficient height to screen any building, open yard or parking area from the view of the freeway.

b) In the future the utility lines should be placed underground to increase the attractiveness of the area.

c) Signs in the area should be regulated to avoid inappropriate or unattractive signs.

C. BICYCLE TRAILS

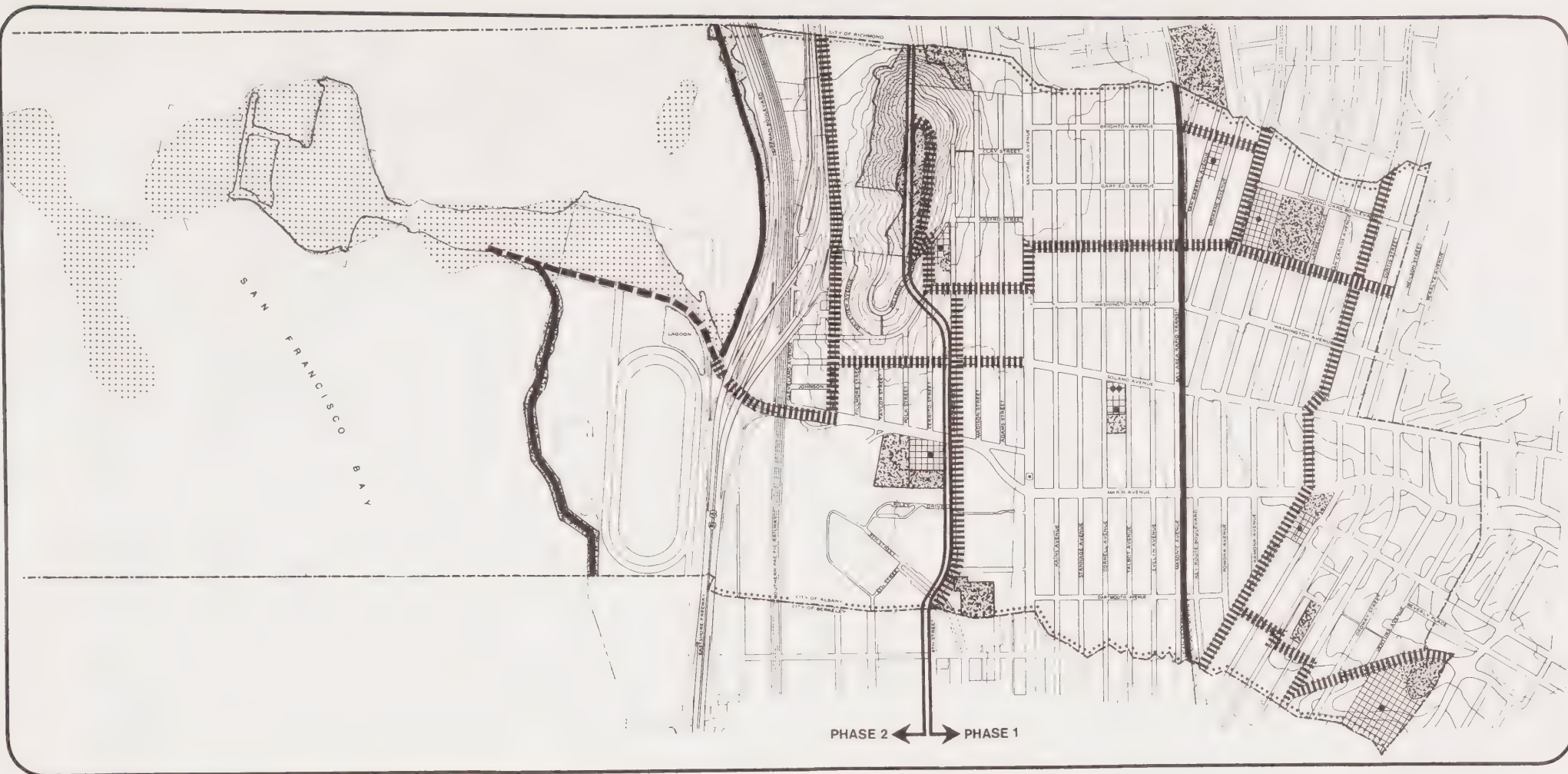
POLICY 1: PROVIDE BIKEWAYS THROUGHOUT THE CITY TO MAJOR DESTINATIONS TO ENSURE SAFETY TO BICYCLE USERS AND TO ENCOURAGE THIS MODE OF TRANSPORTATION.

There are several possible ways to develop bikeways including:

- ▣ Bike routes indicated by route signs on existing roads;
- ▣ Bike lanes indicated by route signs and bike lane striping;
- ▣ Bicycle paths consisting of a two-lane bicycle path, separated from traffic.

Given the character of development, width of streets, traffic volumes, and present pattern of bicycle travel, a two-phased system of bicycle ways (shown on Map 5) should be developed by the City. On local residential streets with a low volume of traffic, signs probably would be sufficient to direct bicycle traffic. Streets carrying high volumes of traffic would benefit from some design treatment to separate and protect bicycle traffic, if street width allows. The City should set aside a portion of S.B. 325 funds and seek other funding to provide bicycle facilities. Improvements, where possible, should be programmed to coincide with any street repaving or reconstruction, as well as any activity to underground utility lines, or to redirect traffic.

The first phase can be readily implemented to serve the bikeway needs of the major portion of the City. The second phase, which would require considerably



MAP 5 **BIKEWAYS**

- PATH
- LANE
- ROUTE
- PHASE BOUNDARY

- OPEN SPACE - RECREATION
- OPEN SPACE - CONSERVATION
- SCHOOLS
- LIBRARY
- CREEK-SIDE CONSERVATION
- ALBANY ISLES PLAN

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more planning and expense, would serve the westerly region of the City as follows:

- Bikeway to Middle School site should be programmed for completion when the school is scheduled to open.
- Bikeway along Pierce Street should be programmed when street improvements are made in connection with the Gateview Apartments.
- A bicycle lane is recommended on the Buchanan Street Extension, providing access to the shoreline, when it is developed. Bicycle access now is made difficult by freeway-bound traffic crossing the railroad tracks, and the freeway entrance and exits. Section 105.5 of the California Streets and Highways Code states, "Upon request of a public agency . . .the department may enter into an agreement with such agency for the construction and maintenance of facilities for pedestrian, bicycle . . .traffic, which generally follow a State highway, where no other suitable facility for such traffic exists . . ."

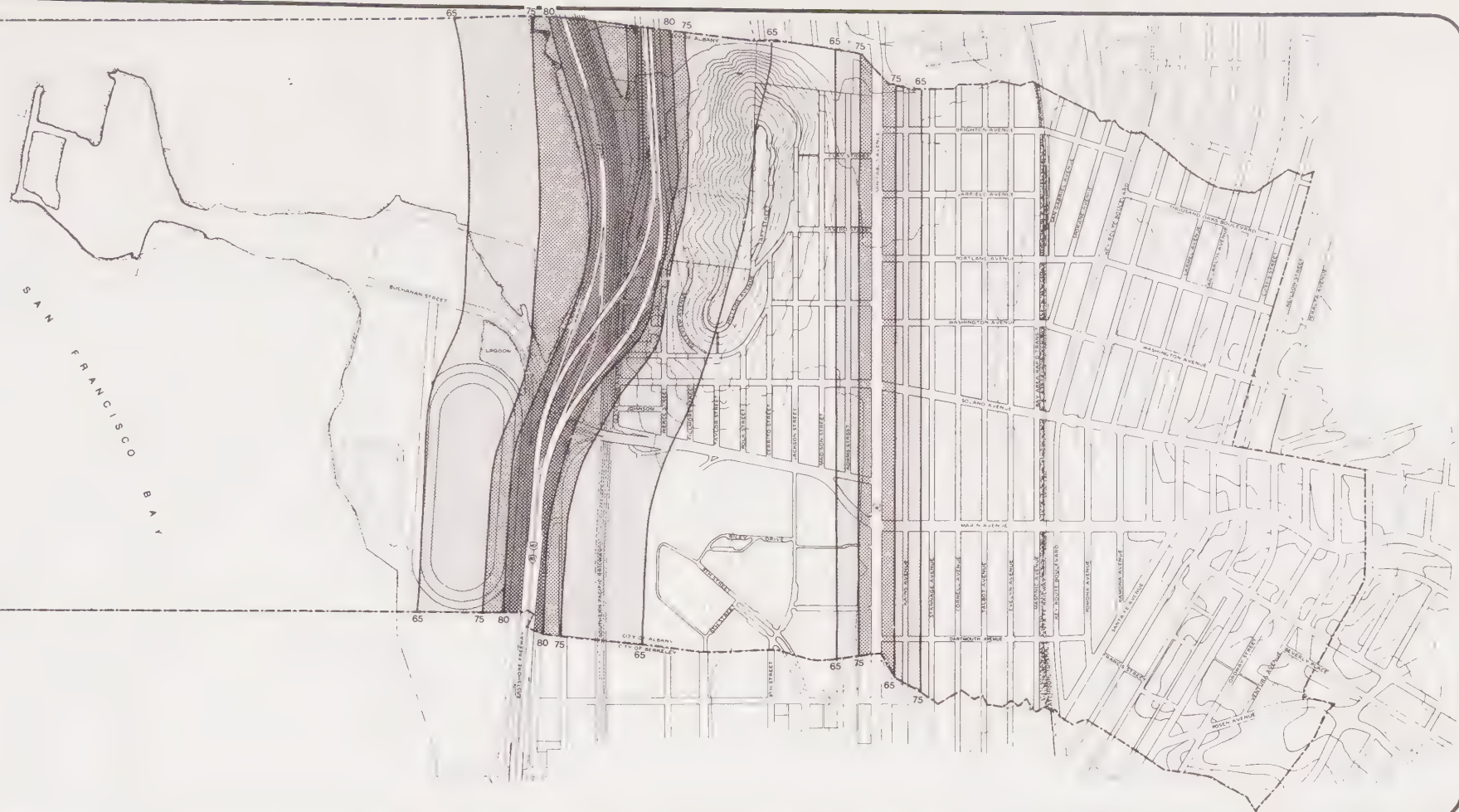
D. TRANSPORTATION NOISE

State requirements regarding the Noise Element of the General Plan state that the City must identify present and projected noise levels for major transportation systems, and require that conclusions about route selection and compatible land use alternatives be made on the basis of noise impact. The projected noise levels for Albany from Route 17 and Route 80 are depicted in Map 6. Existing and projected BART noise levels are illustrated in Maps 7 and 8 respectively.

following policies:

POLICY 1: REDUCE THE EXPOSURE OF ALBANY RESIDENTS TO EXCESSIVE TRANSPORTATION-GENERATED NOISE WHENEVER THIS IS FEASIBLE FROM AN ECONOMIC AND ENGINEERING STANDPOINT.

a) Route 17 and the Route 17/80 interchange produce an unacceptably high noise level for residential use as far away as 1000 feet from the roadway. This would include some of the residences in Albany Village, several blocks of residences between Buchanan Street and Calhoun Street, and the entire west face of Albany Hill. Noise shielding of the interchange is virtually impossible due to the



MAP 6 **HIGHWAY NOISE**
 CONTOURS OF PREDICTED NOISE LEVELS, 1995, IN
 THE VICINITY OF INTERSTATE 80 AND STATE ROUTE 17

NOTE: THE NOISE CONTOURS ON THIS MAP ARE EXPRESSED IN L_{10} dB(A). THEY DO NOT INCLUDE NOISE SOURCES OUTSIDE THE RIGHT-OF-WAY NOR ATTENUATION DUE TO BUILDINGS AND BARRIERS. THE CONTOURS ARE SUBJECT TO A RANGE OF ± 3 dB(A).

SOURCE: STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, DISTRICT 04, NOISE CONTOURS FOR CITY OF ALBANY, 1974.

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design of the existing configuration and the adjacent topography. In order for noise shielding to be effective it must be high enough to block the line of sight from the noise source to the recipient. A shield high enough to block the line of sight from Albany Hill would be totally infeasible from an economic and engineering standpoint. The interchange itself is a double curve, and shielding along the edge of the curve would present a hazard for motorists, whose sight distance would be dangerously reduced.

b) The noise generated by Southern Pacific Railroad operations is not as constant as that from Interstate 80 and Route 17, but constitutes a source of relatively loud volumes, compounded by the location of the tracks adjacent to the freeway and the amplification effect of Albany Hill. According to data supplied by Southern Pacific, approximately 26-29 trains per day pass through Albany, with 70 percent of these operations occurring during evening and nighttime hours (7 p.m. to 7 a.m.). From noise readings taken elsewhere,* it is reasonable to assign the following noise contours to Albany operations:

<u>Distance from Track</u>	<u>dBA</u>
100 feet	100-105
500 feet	90-95
1,000 feet	70-75

According to HUD guidelines,** unshielded residential sites within 600 feet of the tracks (based on the roughly 20 nighttime operations in Albany) are in the "normally unacceptable" category for noise exposure. Those areas most severely affected by railroad noise are the west portion of Albany Village and the neighborhood bounded by Washington, Buchanan, Pierce, and Cleveland Streets.

Much of the noise emanating from the Southern Pacific Railroad operations could feasibly be shielded since the tracks are situated at grade, and there is adequate space available to construct noise shielding. The railroad is not required to build shields, and it is highly unlikely that they would be willing to do so. However, the possibility of cooperative agreements with the Southern Pacific

* Wyle Laboratories Report WCR 73-5, Assessment of Noise Environments Around Railroad Operations, July 1973, pp. 3-18 through 3-20.

** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Noise Assessment Guidelines, August 1971, pp. 14-15.

44 Railroad allowing the City of Albany and the University to install shields such as earth-mounds or walls within the right-of-way should be thoroughly examined, especially for the areas mentioned. Conditions of 100 dBA at the residences on Pierce Avenue clearly warrent attention.

Finally, landscaping such as the tree planting suggested in the Scenic Highway section, while providing little actual attenuation, would enhance the visual isolation, and so may reduce a person's awareness of noise to a greater extent.

c) BART trains in Albany have been recorded at up to 89 dBA 100 feet from the tracks. The highest recorded noise from BART trains at the North Berkeley Portal, slightly below grade with noise shields, was 76 dBA. This indicates that noise shielding along the entire route in Albany could significantly mitigate the effects of BART created noise. Although the Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way lies adjacent to the BART tracks, the noise generated from these operations is insignificant, since only two trains per day pass through Albany.

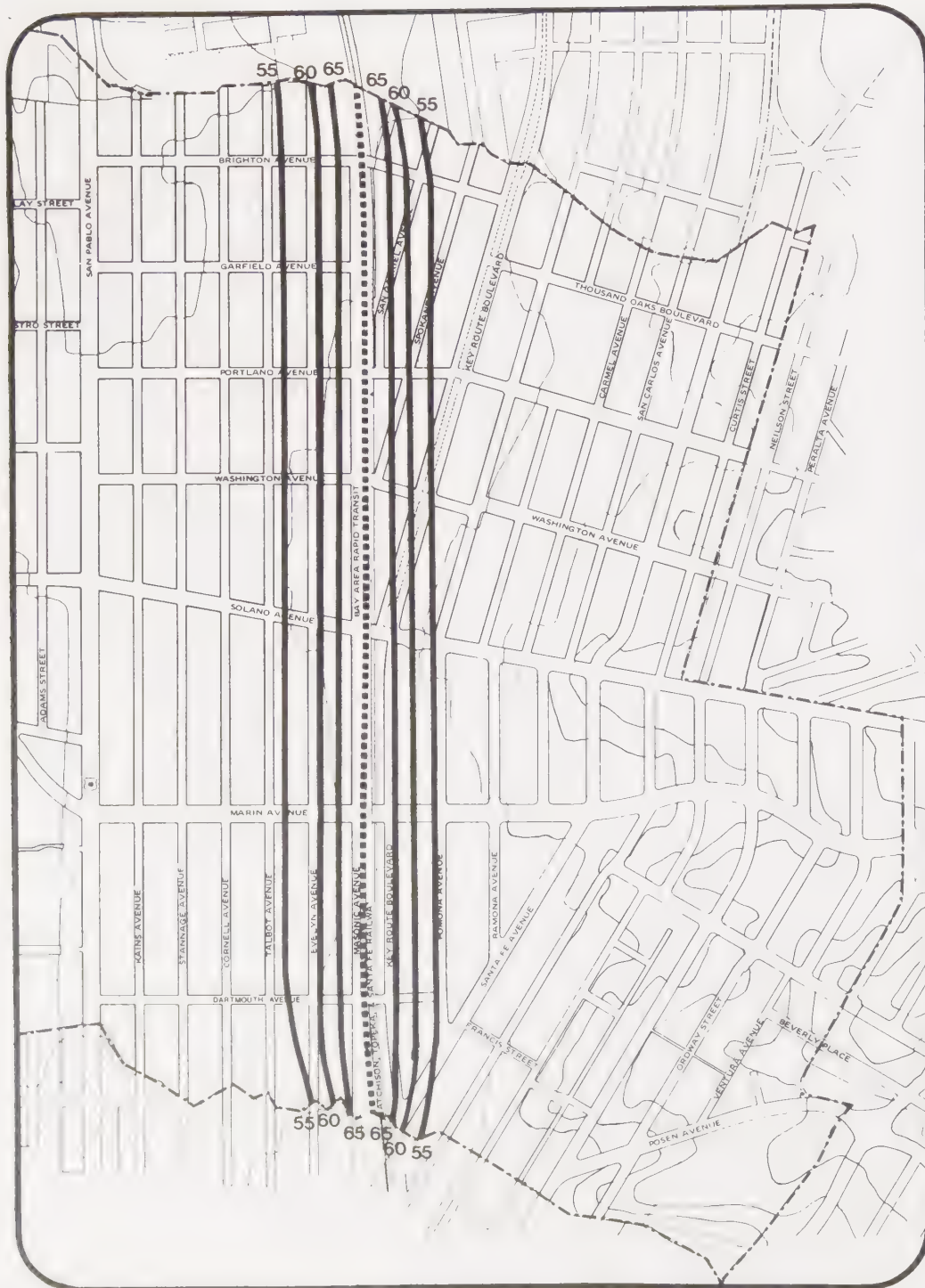
The City should continue to press the Rapid Transit District to provide noise shields on the tracks for the entire length of Albany.

d) San Pablo Avenue is largely commercial in use with several residential uses on the street. Although the noise contours indicate unacceptably high levels of noise for residential areas behind the commercial development, those contours are drawn without regard to the intermittent shielding effects of buildings acting as a partial buffer to noise.

POLICY 2: ENSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT IN HIGH NOISE AREAS INCORPORATES ADEQUATE INSULATION TO ENSURE THE REDUCTION OF NOISE EXPOSURE FOR EXISTING RESIDENTS OF THE CITY AS WELL AS FUTURE OCCUPANTS.

a) Albany should consider adopting a noise control ordinance based either on the Model Noise Ordinance prepared by the League of California Cities (Revised January, 1973) or on the New York State Proposed Regulations for the Prevention and Control of Environmental Noise Pollution (N.Y. State Department of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Noise Control, Albany, New York, 12201).

b) Albany should use the noise exposure standards promulgated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for approval of new residential construction.



MAP 7

EXISTING RAPID TRANSIT NOISE

CONTOURS ARE EXPRESSED IN L_{DN} -dB(A)

SOURCE: ACOUSTICS SURVEY CONDUCTED BY B.A.R.T.D.
OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 21, 1972.

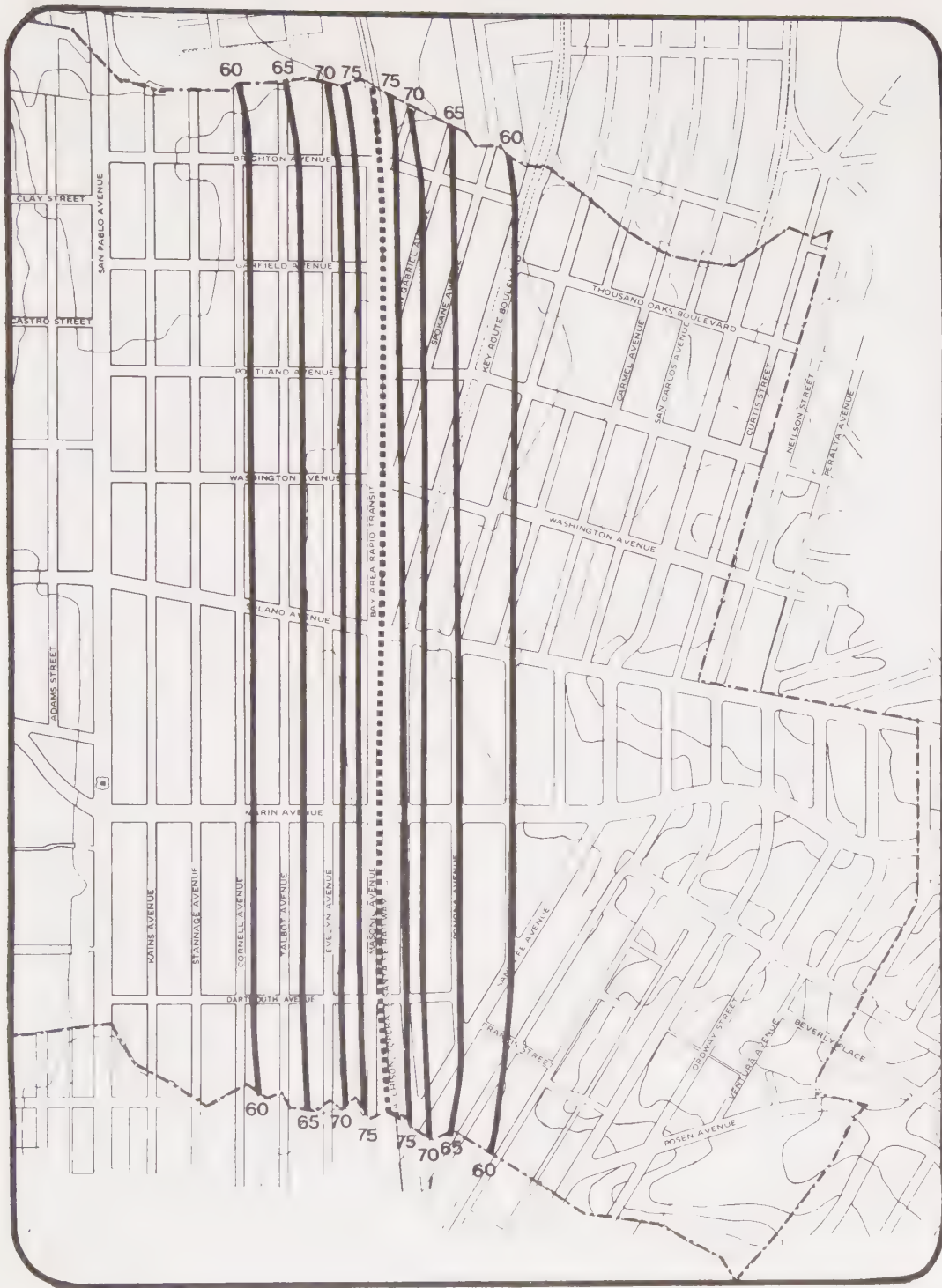
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MAP 8
PROJECTED RAPID TRANSIT NOISE,
1995

CONTOURS ARE EXPRESSED IN L_{DN} -dB(A)

SOURCE: ACOUSTICS SURVEY CONDUCTED BY B. A. R. T. D.
 OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 21, 1972.

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c) The standards in the California Administrative Code, Article 4, Section 1092, Noise Insulation Standards, should be incorporated into the Albany building code as the requirements for new multi-family residential construction in Albany.

V. THE COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Albany is primarily a residential community with only 2 percent of its land area developed in industrial use, and 16 percent developed in commercial uses. Given the pattern of development in the City, it is reasonable to assume that industrial uses will remain and be limited to the area in which they now exist, adjacent to the freeway. The Golden Gate Fields Raceway is a commercial recreation use, which is also assumed to remain at its present location during the planning period.

Commercial activity in Albany is concentrated on two major streets: Solano Avenue and San Pablo Avenue. Each street is discussed separately in the following sections.

A. SAN PABLO AVENUE

San Pablo Avenue, which carries an average daily traffic of between 23,000 and 27,000 vehicles,* is developed principally with automobile-oriented commercial uses, including automobile sales and service establishments, which tend to be located on the west side of the street, and eating and service establishments, located on the east side of the street. The street functions as a highway commercial strip, relying on customers from neighboring communities, as well as from Albany itself. The street currently does not function well as a thoroughfare, due to the deficient width of traffic lanes, and turns made from the center lanes. Visually the street lacks attractiveness, distinction, or identity, and this is to a large extent due to its former role as U.S. Highway 40.

The General Plan recognizes the two-fold role of San Pablo Avenue as a major thoroughfare and as a commercial strip oriented primarily to serving the automobile and its occupants. The following factors were considered in assessing

* State of California, Department of Transportation: 1972 Traffic Volumes on California State Highways, 1972.

50 the future commercial role of San Pablo Avenue:

1. The population of Albany will remain fairly stable, except for the increase in population resulting from the completion of the Gateview Apartments on the west side of Albany Hill. This development will contain commercial facilities, and therefore will not generate significant new local commercial activity elsewhere in Albany.
2. Any increase in general commercial development will occur on Solano Avenue.
3. San Pablo Avenue will continue to attract customers from adjacent communities for specialized (especially auto-oriented) commercial uses.
4. The established automobile dealers will form a nucleus of commercial uses and will continue to sustain Albany's economic base.

POLICY 1: REINFORCE THE EXISTING COMMERCIAL CHARACTER OF SAN PABLO AVENUE.

Encourage the retention of auto-related uses such as automobile sales, parts and services, and other businesses relying upon community and regional through-traffic, and encourage new heavy commercial and light industrial uses to locate on San Pablo Avenue, which uses, at the discretion of the City Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council, may include:

- ▣ printing, publishing, and allied industries;
- ▣ assemblage of professional, scientific, and controlling instruments;
- ▣ furniture, appliance, and lumber sales;
- ▣ the manufacture of electronic components and accessories;
- ▣ food products manufacture;
- ▣ miscellaneous custom and light (non-fabricating) manufacture;

□ general storage, wholesaling, and transport facilities.

Such uses should be enclosed. Parking and storage areas should be landscaped to screen them from view of adjacent residences and along the rear lot line.

POLICY 2: STIMULATE THE EXPANSION OF EXISTING LARGE BUSINESSES AND THE RECEPTION OF NEW INDUSTRIAL USES BY URGING THE CONSOLIDATION OF PARCELS AND THE INFILLING OF marginally used vacant space fronting SAN PABLO AVENUE.

POLICY 3: RECOGNIZE THE INADEQUATE DEPTH OF LOTS FRONTING ON SAN PABLO.

Allow the possible expansion of commercial uses to Kains and Adams Streets, but only as a selective accommodation to business (e.g. consolidated parking facilities) and not as a goal in itself. The commercial expansion district would allow businesses fronting on San Pablo Avenue to obtain space behind the rear portion of the lot for additional development, and offers the potential for the development of larger new uses. The expansion should only occur from parcels fronting on San Pablo Avenue, and all rear lot development should provide screening and landscaping for adjacent residential uses.

The blocks fronting on San Pablo Avenue were analyzed according to existing commercial development, existing expansion into rear parcels fronting on either Adams Street or Kains Street, the potential for additional development or expansion, as well as the character of the rear portion of the blocks fronting either on Adams or Kains, and the desirability of new development to replace older structures. This analysis was used to designate the commercial expansion areas indicated on the General Plan map, Map 9.

POLICY 4: PROTECT ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL AREAS FROM ANY NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

a) Automobile access to the commercial or other uses fronting on San Pablo Avenue should be provided from the east-west side streets as much as possible. Vehicular access from either Adams Street or Kains Street should be minimized due to the narrow width and residential character of these streets.

- 52 b) All non-commercial, light industrial uses should be completely enclosed by a structure.
- c) Any non-residential use adjacent to a residential structure should provide screening of parking areas and buildings to consist either of landscaping of sufficient height to screen the use from view of residential structures or fencing with landscaping.

POLICY 5: IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF SAN PABLO AVENUE AS WELL AS VEHICULAR FLOW AND SAFETY TO ENHANCE THE AUTO-ORIENTATION OF THE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

- a) Encourage the planting of trees and shrubs in any open space within the right-of-way;
- b) Develop controls on large protruding signs, and encourage additional setback requirements to foster an awareness of open space in the right-of-way corridor;
- c) Develop shelters and other street furniture at the bus stops, where vehicular and pedestrian traffic interface.

B. SOLANO AVENUE

POLICY 1: NEW DEVELOPMENT ON SOLANO AVENUE EAST OF ADAMS STREET SHOULD REINFORCE THE LOCAL, GENERAL COMMERCIAL CHARACTER OF THE STREET.

Solano Avenue is developed with general commercial uses, services, professional offices, and residential uses. Conveniently located for access from residential development in Albany, the street beautification program completed by the City was designed to make the street more attractive for commercial development. This street will continue to serve as a neighborhood and community-oriented shopping area, perhaps drawing some patronage from nearby Berkeley residential areas.

Future development should include General Commercial uses oriented toward neighborhood shopping, services and professional offices. Retail uses would include food and related establishments, dry goods, home furnishings, and goods of a similar nature. Services include business services such as insurance and real estate offices, or personal services such as beauty shops. Professional uses would

include medical, dental, and legal uses, as well as other professional services.

The ground floor of all new developments along Solano Avenue east of San Pablo should be required to be occupied by the above General Commercial uses. Upper floors could also be occupied by General Commercial uses, and, in addition, east of Kains Street, residential uses would also be permitted in the upper floors.

VI. THE PLANNING PROCESS

The adoption of the General Plan is but one step in an ongoing community planning process. The Plan, as an adopted document, is designed to accomplish several purposes:

1. It complies with the requirements of the State of California Government Code by containing the mandatory plan elements, and serves as a guideline for the revision of the Zoning Ordinance if policies in the Plan indicate that such a change would be necessary to achieve consistency between the Zoning Ordinance and the General Plan. Table 5 (page 56) contains a summary of zoning classifications.
2. It clarifies and articulates public policy and the intentions of the City Council with respect to the future development of the City.
3. It serves as a means of informing residents, other public agencies and prospective investors of the long-range and short-range goals, policies and development standards of the community.
4. It establishes a basis for coordination, understanding and negotiation among public agencies who have responsibility within the Albany city limits.

A. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

In order to carry out the programs recommended in the Plan, the City Council should establish a planning function in the City offices, under the jurisdiction of the Administrative Officer. This function would include the appointment of a Community Services Engineer with specific duties, including the establishment and administration of a design review process, and the institution of the Capital Improvements Program.

TABLE 5 SUMMARY OF EXISTING ZONING AND RECOMMENDED CHANGES

EXISTING				RECOMMENDED CHANGES (details appear in text)
Zoning District	Permitted Uses	Minimum Lot Size per Unit (square feet)	Maximum Density (D.U.'s*/net acre)	
R-1	Single-family Residence	3,750	12	Unchanged
R-2	Single-family 2, 3, 4, family	3,750 1,250 (requires use permit)	35	Delete use permit requirements; eliminate restrictions on the types of residential uses.
R-3	Single-family D.U. Multiple family	5,000 500	36	Reduce maximum permitted density to 70 D.U./acre, and provide density bonuses on the basis of lot size (see Table 2).
R-1250	Single-family 2, 3, 4, family	3,750 1,250	35	Unchanged
R-1650	Single-family 2, 3, family D.U.	3,750 1,650	28	Unchanged
C-1	General Commercial, Apartments optional above ground floor	500	87	Reduce maximum permitted density to 70 D.U./acre and provide R-3 density bonuses on the basis of lot size and require commercial uses on the ground floor.
C-2	Highway retail		D.U.'s not permitted	Add light industrial.
C-E-3	Commercial Expansion		D.U.'s not permitted	Convert most C-E-3 to C-E-4
C-E-4	Commercial Expansion, Apartments Optional		Not specified	Provide density bonuses on the basis of lot size.
M	Manufacturing	5,000	D.U.'s not permitted	Require design review.
O	Public and Private Recreation Facilities		D.U.'s not permitted	Unchanged
H-C	Hillside Control (Albany Hill) Any use permitted in district combined with H-C district (Residential)		As set forth in use permit	Require geologic investigation where site falls within areas designated on Geologic Hazards Map. Require design review.
H	Any use permitted in district combined with H district (Residential)		As specified in district combined with H district	Require geologic investigation where site falls within areas designated on Geologic Hazards Map. Require design review.
P	Professional Offices any use permitted in district combined with P district	5,000 as required in district which is combined with P district	As required in district combined with P district	Unchanged

* D.U. = dwelling units

The Community Services Engineer should have had a planning and design education and public administration experience, and possess a familiarity with Federal and State programs and grant application requirements and procedures. This person would act in an advisory capacity to the Planning and Zoning Commission and to the City Council; as well as performing the following functions:

Prepare the necessary ordinances and zoning amendments, and carry out the recommendations of the General Plan.

Be responsible for the Housing Maintenance Program recommended to improve the quality of the housing stock. The Community Services Engineer would work in coordination with the Building Inspector in development records on structures and a program to inspect housing in the treatment areas designated in the General Plan. The Community Services Engineer would be responsible for investigating the feasibility of and developing a revolving loan fund with City input, as well as for investigating private sources of home improvement loans. The person selected for the position would set up a record system that would include not only code enforcement, but also investigation of the potential for structural hazards noted under the seismic safety portion of the General Plan.

- ▣ Consult and advise on ways of carrying out the General Plan.
- ▣ Promote public interest in and understanding of the General Plan and the regulations based upon its policies and recommendations.
- ▣ Submit an annual report to the Planning Commission and City Council on the status and application of the General Plan.
- ▣ Coordinate with Federal, State, and regional agencies with regard to planning matters including Environmental Protection Agency, ABAG, BCDC, and the Air Quality Control Board.
- ▣ Provide technical assistance to the Planning and Zoning Commission in reviewing specific proposals for development as regards conformity with the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and all applicable codes. This assistance would be in the form of an analysis of new developments, to be

spelled out in greater detail in the description of a Design Review process to follow.

- Develop and maintain in coordination with the Administrative Officer, City Engineer and heads of city departments a Capital Improvement Program that will set priorities for public improvements in accordance with the recommendations of the General Plan.

B. DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

The City has a design review procedure outlined in the Zoning Ordinance, applicable to any structure or building in any C or M district, or any building, structure or improvement that requires a use permit. Whereas the Zoning Ordinance sets basic standards regarding density, provision of open space, and setbacks, the design review procedure should provide for the consideration of additional factors. It is recommended that the City extend this design review procedure to any development in a residential district of two or more units, as well as those in a C or M district. The design review procedure should also be followed in the review of any public building or large scale street improvement.

The proposed procedure should include the submission of the necessary site plan showing location of all structures and uses, including off-street parking and loading spaces, architectural plans showing all elevations of proposed structures as they will appear upon completion, and landscape plans in all districts. The review shall consider the standards designated in Zoning Ordinance 61-011 as well as the following criteria:

- Identify natural hazards: Special studies should be required of sites located in areas outlined in Map 3, Seismic and Geologic Hazards Susceptibility Areas. Studies should define the extent of hazard, and proposals for mitigation. The review committee should decide if mitigation measures meet standards required by City codes and are sufficient to protect life and property.
- Identify areas of natural resource protection: Relates to areas identified in Map 2, Open Space and Conservation. Insure that development conforms to standards set for protection of such areas. Plans should be responsive to the goal of preserving the environment.

- ▣ Identify areas of special concern: These are indicated in Map 6, Highway Noise and the Plan text related to scenic highways. Development in areas of concern indicated should provide adequate shielding from noise for occupants of new development. Development should conform to policies expressed regarding scenic highways.
- ▣ Residential development: Design of buildings should conform to all restrictions of the Zoning Ordinance. Design of structures should be compatible with scale and character of existing development. Structures should be designed to provide attractive facade and landscaping at the pedestrian level.
- ▣ Commercial development: Uses and structures should be designed to encourage pedestrian use on Solano Avenue. Detail at the pedestrian scale increases visual interest. When located adjacent to residential uses, screening should shield residential uses from traffic and noise generated by commercial uses. Commercial development on San Pablo Avenue should be designed to enhance the auto-oriented commercial character of the street. The rear portion of commercial properties should be screened from view by landscaping and fencing from residential areas.
- ▣ Economic: Evaluate the effect of development on the need for increased public expenditures, public facilities and/or services. The studies conducted should indicate how the proposed development will affect the economic development in the City, whether proposed development will improve the vitality of commercial areas, or lead to the deterioration of such centers, and whether it will provide employment opportunities for residents, without discrimination.
- ▣ Social: It is difficult within the scope of design review to monitor the social effects of development. The choices made in developing the General Plan policies embody choices in social values, such as the decision to maintain the existing single-family housing stock, and the desire to maintain the quality of the residential environment. Goals which appear desirable for the community include insuring non-discrimination with respect to age, race, color, creed or sex. The use of the ABAG model for housing subsidy allocation is one attempt to deal with social issues.

60 C. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The City should develop a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) which implements the recommendations of the General Plan, as well as establishing City priorities for improvement programming.

- ▣ The CIP should incorporate all significant improvements for a five year period, and enable the City Council to program items according to their priority.
- ▣ The Program would be developed by the Community Services Engineer under the direction of the Administrative Officer, in coordination with the heads of the various departments responsible for the proposed public works.
- ▣ The Program should include specific improvements of recreation facilities, undergrounding of utilities, street improvements and improvement of waste-water collection facilities. The improvements should be tied to appropriate funding sources, such as Gas Tax revenues, General Revenue Sharing funds, etc.
- ▣ Priorities for funding should be determined by consideration of the following factors: the necessity of the project to eliminate a hazard to life and limb, the possibility of conservation of existing property and resources, and the availability of specific monies to carry out a particular project.
- ▣ Improvements should be ranked according to priority, with the highest priority funded in the first year of the program, and subsequent high priority items funded in the following years of the program.
- ▣ The CIP should be used to evaluate the distribution and location of improvements, and to consider the cumulative effect of public investment in various areas of the City, and to determine the most equitable and effective allocation of scarce resources.



MAP 9

GENERAL PLAN

RESIDENTIAL (DWELLING UNITS PER NET ACRE)	
	LOW DENSITY (APPROX. 12 MAX.)
	MODERATE DENSITY (APPROX. 35 MAX.)
	HIGH DENSITY (APPROX. 70 MAX.)
	RESIDENTIAL TOWERS (210 MAX.)

	COMMERCIAL GENERAL
	HIGHWAY
	EXPANSION
	RECREATION

	INSTITUTIONAL SCHOOL
	CIVIC CENTER
	OTHER
	ALBANY ISLES PLAN

	INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH
	OPEN SPACE
	PARKS & REC.
	CONSERVATION

	CIRCULATION COLLECTOR
	MINOR ARTERIAL
	TYPE IV NON FWY.
	FREEWAY

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